Bengaluru Sunday, August 24, 2025 Pages 20 Vol 78 No 235 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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The Power of Good

Anil Ambani booked in 'bank fraud' case

CBI searches his residence in Rs 2,929-cr case

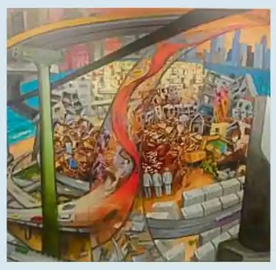
P9

Travel
Page16

The wild side of Ooty

Explore the unspoiled Nilgiris with pristine forests, scenic treks, and a nostalgic ride on the heritage toy train

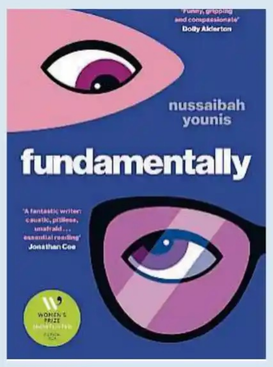
Art & Pursuits
Page18



Splendour of everyday

What makes Patwardhan instantly relatable is his ability to connect art with the mundanity of our existence

Books
Page15



Farce and feminism

This is a sharp, witty satire on aid agencies and ISIS brides and an entertaining political caper

Food & Drink
Page17

Thali wisdom

Simple, seasonal, and sustainable, the Indian thali is a gut-friendly meal philosophy that's been ahead of its time

Fractured futures: Children still trapped in hard labour

Rising costs and structural inequities continue to push children into labour and migration, stripping them of education, safety, and justice

VARSHA GOWDA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Around 16% of children in Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were found to be working. In pic, a child sells flowers to a woman in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/ B K JANARDHAN

While toiling in the agricultural fields of Bihar, Munir* often imagined cities as shimmering with opportunity. At 13, when he was offered the chance to move to Bengaluru for a short-term tile-laying job, those distant possibilities drew tantalisingly closer.

Upon arrival, he envisioned moving seamlessly from one job to another, lodging with a relative in a cramped city room. "Back then, I would take on many jobs in the village anyway and was not particularly good at studies, so school seemed pointless. This felt different," he recalls.

The pattern of migration from the region for skilled construction work appealed to him even as a boy. "Even with most of my family working, it was difficult to find money to eat," he says. Many boys in the village worked in some capacity or had plans to migrate. Then, Munir thought he was lucky.

At a traffic signal in Bengaluru now, he has a minute to haul the box of mulberries above his shoulder and dart from car to scooter to auto to make a sale. "My relative buys mulberries in bulk, and we distribute them into boxes and sell them at signals," he says.

Sometimes, to exhaust the stocks, he spends seven to eight hours a day on the road. His feet ache, his breathing has grown laboured, and as meals become more irregular, his health has suffered. "I barely have enough for my living expenses. More than that, one day I have a job, the next day it is gone. It is easy to feel dejected in such an environment. I miss my home, my mother and family. It is hard to keep going when nothing is improving," he says.

INSIGHT

When he was new in the city, many people would ask how old he was. Now, those questions have thinned to a trickle. At the signal just a few metres ahead, a traffic cop stands, keeping a watchful eye on vehicles poised to start. "Initially, I was scared that I would be caught and put somewhere. Now, I pass for an adult," the 16-year-old says.

Munir's work places him in the category of a 'street child' — defined by the Commission on Human Rights in 1994 as any child for whom the street (including unoccupied dwellings or wastelands) has become a habitual abode or source of livelihood.

Although often assumed to have declined, child labour remains a stark reality across both urban and rural landscapes in Karnataka.

According to data from Child Rights and You (CRY), out of 2,750 adolescents surveyed, 12% were involved in full-time work and 6% in part-time labour in 2024 in the state.

About 16% of children aged six to 18 were engaged in either full-time or part-time employment in Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Data was collected from 51,254 children across 20 districts.

Children continue to labour in brick kilns, waste segregation units, agriculture and in domestic environments, despite decades of legislation meant to protect them from exploitation.

A rise in the cost of living, deepening agrarian distress, and adult unemployment have only made them more vulnerable to entering the workforce early. "The nature of child labour has become more unorganised in cities post-pandemic. Many child labourers are part of families that migrate to cities and eventually become involved in the informal sector," says Vasudeva Sharma N V, executive director of the Child Rights Trust. Work on the margins, he adds, is difficult to monitor or regulate.

This shift to the unorganised sector has also coincided with declining awareness about the toll child labour takes on children. "Employing children is passed off as 'helping' the family to earn some extra money. This mindset is dangerous because it denies children their right to learn, grow, and dream," says Peter Suneel, general manager, programmes, CRY, South division.

Many activists also report backlash from the public in railway stations, apartment societies, and neighbourhoods when they intervene in suspected child labour cases.

▸ Child labour, Page 2

Quickly

Dharmasthala case: Witness arrested

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Saturday arrested the complainant-witness in the Dharmasthala mass burial case and produced him before the JMFC court in Belthangady, which remanded him in 12 days SIT custody.
Details on Page 3

India has 3 'red lines' on US trade deal: EAM

India has certain "red lines" in its negotiations for a trade deal with the US and it will stand firm in protecting the interests of farmers and small producers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday, days before additional American tariffs on Indian goods are set to come into effect.
Details on Page 3

ED arrests Cong MLA in illegal betting case

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday arrested Karnataka Congress MLA KC Veerendra Puppy in connection with an illegal online and offline betting case. Puppy, the legislator from Chitradurga, was arrested in Gangtok, Sikkim, and produced before a local court, ED sources said, following large-scale raids on Friday.
Details on Page 3

With Rs 936 cr in assets, Naidu is richest CM

Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu has emerged as the richest chief minister in the country, with assets worth Rs 936 crore, according to a latest report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR). Naidu owes his fortune to his shareholding in Heritage Foods Ltd, a listed dairy company.
Details on Page 9

5 dead as tour bus crashes in New York

At least five people have been killed when a tour bus returning to New York City from Niagara Falls with 54 passengers, including from India and China, crashed on a highway outside Buffalo, according to reports. Most of the passengers were from India, China and the Philippines, and many were not wearing seatbelts, police said.

The 'ideal wife' in the Indian courtroom

Judicial interpretations of marriage reflect the conflict between constitutional rights and cultural morality

JISU KETAN PATTANAIK & SUMIT KUMAR SINGH

AI-GENERATED IMAGE

Marriage in India has long been perceived as both a sacred union and a social institution, with courts mediating between these two competing ideals. The judicial interpretations of marriage have a contradictory history: On one hand are the constitutional rights of equality, autonomy and personal liberty. On the other is the idea of marriage as a duty, endurance and sacrament, often reinforcing gendered expectations. Across decades of case law, courts have oscillated between pragmatic and moral approaches to marriage. This duality reflects the conflict between evolving social realities of marital conjugal life and the persisting influence of cultural morality on legal reasoning.

One such action speaks in strong favour as on August 5, 2025, the Madhya Pradesh High Court dismissed a husband's appeal for divorce, and lauded his wife for her steadfast commitment to marriage despite years of desertion. The reasoning was striking: The wife, though deserted for nearly two decades, had continued to live with her in-laws, with constant care for them, and preserved every outward symbol of her marriage. The Bench praised her as the "ideal Indian woman," rooted in *dharma*, cultural values, and the sanctity of the marital bond. Hindu marriage, the court said, is "sacred, eternal and indissoluble", a union to be preserved regardless of hardship. On the surface, this is a story of quiet resilience. Yet when a constitutional court codifies that resilience into a judicial ideal, it prompts a deeper question: Whose values does it truly serve, and at what unseen cost?

THE SUNDAY STORY

This approach is far from new. In *Narmada Jena vs Bidyadhar Swain* case in 2015, the Orissa High Court reproduced a Sanskrit verse delineating the attributes of an "ideal wife": a servant in household duties, a minister in counsel, a mother in nurturing, Rambha in the conjugal bed, patient as the earth, beautiful as Goddess Lakshmi, and devoted to family tradition. The judicial application of this verse creates a normative framework that constrains women's autonomy and individuality. The wife is cast as the guardian of marital stability, bearing the burden of emotional, domestic, and sexual labour, while the husband is seldom held to the same standards. By embedding cultural ideals into law, such judgements risk perpetuating gender hierarchies under the guise of judicial reasoning.

Not all courts, however, have embraced this idealised image. In *Basant Kumar Dwivedi vs Kanchan Dwivedi* case in 2024, the Allahabad High Court made a crucial distinction: "The Court has to deal, not with an ideal husband and ideal wife (assuming any such exist) but with the particular man and woman before it." This recognition is significant. Invoking mythical archetypes only masks the lived realities of conflict and the rights of individuals involved. But such realism has often been the exception rather than the rule.

▸ Marriage at crossroads, Page 2

'Vice-presidential election is an ideological battle'

The Opposition has fielded a joint candidate against NDA's C P Radhakrishnan in the vice-presidential election. He explains why the contest is not about an individual and responds to allegations by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Shemin Joy** in conversation with former Supreme Court judge Justice **B Sudershan Reddy

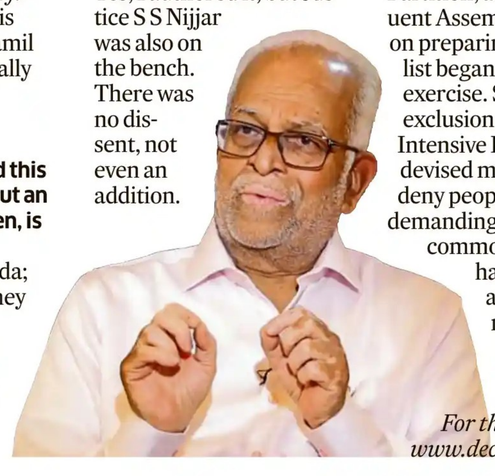
THE DEEP TAKE

• What does your candidature mean when the numbers are stacked against you?
I have never viewed this as a losing battle. The V-P election is decided by MPs, not parties. My appeal to MPs is to judge my candidature on merit. Questions on numbers may not be relevant. I believe MPs will consider my track record and service to the nation.

• Some have framed this as a Tamil vs Telugu contest, since your opponent is from Tamil Nadu. How do you view this?
India, that is Bharat, is one. There is only one citizenship — Indian. Both Radhakrishnan-*ji* and I are Indians. This Telangana-versus-Tamil Nadu narrative is totally incorrect.

• After filing your nomination, you said this election was not about an individual. What, then, is this battle about?
I did not set the agenda; the other side did. They proudly proclaimed that their candidate joined the RSS at 15 and that this contest was ideological. I responded that it was indeed an ideological fight — between a liberal Constitutional democrat and a quintessential RSS person. Numbers become irrelevant at such a point.

• Amit Shah has alleged you support Naxalism, citing your judgment banning Salwa Judum. How do you respond?
It was not my judgment but the Supreme Court's. Yes, I authored it, but Justice S S Nijjar was also on the bench. There was no dissent, not even an addition.



A review petition was dismissed. I was trained by jurists like K Parasaran that a judge should never defend his judgment in public; the judgment should speak for itself. The SC did not say 'Don't fight Naxals'. It only said you cannot outsource it. Perhaps the home minister may not have gone through the judgment and may have been wrongly briefed.

• In your statement, you referred to institutional integrity. With allegations of institutional capture and vote theft today, how do you see this?
The right to vote is not merely statutory; it is a constitutionally guaranteed right. In 1928, the All Parties Conference recommended universal adult suffrage because our leaders rejected the colonial legacy where only the wealthy, educated, or government allies could vote. Even during Partition, as the Constituent Assembly met, work on preparing the voters' list began as an inclusive exercise. So, why this exclusion in the Special Intensive Revision? We've devised mechanisms to deny people their vote by demanding documents the common man doesn't have. Isn't that an infringement of the Constitution?

For the full text, visit: www.deccanherald.co.in

Tracking absentee children key

Child labour, from Page 1

Meera* was only 12 when she began reeling silk in a tribal village in Jharkhand. Orphaned at a young age, she relied on her extended family, who frequently weaponised food as a means of control.

When the prospect of employment as a domestic worker in Bengaluru arose, it appeared to her as a chance at escape.

Once in the city, her expectations quickly unravelled as she was passed from one 'handler' to another, three or four in succession, each time uprooted and placed in a new household.

"She was 14 when she approached the police station herself after being subjected to repeated physical and sexual abuse. She was employed as a child domestic worker," says P Lakshapathi, founder and executive director of the Association for Promoting Social Action. The organisation runs two childcare homes in Bengaluru.

As in Meera's case, children who migrate for work often have the consent, and sometimes the encouragement, of their families. For Munir, stagnating wages in agricultural labour and extreme poverty drove him to move. "Even though there are jobs in Bihar, they are not easily available and money is limited," he says. Those with larger parcels of land can still make a living from agriculture.

Poverty, disadvantaged caste backgrounds, landlessness and family issues remain major drivers of child labour. Dalit and Adivasi children, for instance, are disproportionately represented as child workers — an NSSO report found that tribal children faced a child labour incidence of 3.8%, notably higher than the national average of 2.74% in 2005.

Often a symptom of deeper social inequities, child labour can only be tackled when these roots are addressed. "Ensuring adult employment in native regions and making sure welfare measures like food rations reach migrant families will help control child labour, since children are often pushed towards work when parents are desperate," says Sharma. He stresses that source states with high migration need stronger follow-up systems to ensure children who drop out of school are not lost to labour.

Out of classrooms

While many parents view schooling as a long-term investment, immediate needs have also started to weigh heavily. "We also want our children to move forward, but staying in one place without a job is difficult," says Amitha, a flower seller in Bengaluru.

Amitha has two children — a boy and a girl, both under 10, who help her sell flowers for a few months in the year. "They go to school when we go to our hometown in Odisha. It is too difficult to get documents together every time we move," she says.

It is common for children to migrate with families. Sometimes, entire families relocate; other times, children move with aunts or uncles. Yet having a guardian nearby does not guarantee school access.

Language differences, the lack of schools close to settlements, and missing documents often shut migrant children out of the classroom. A 2020 study by the Kailash Satyarthi Foundation found that only 55% of migrant children accessed education, compared to 75% of those who remained in their villages.

"It has been proven that schooling is essential for the development of a child. Apart from this, every child has the desire to interact with other children in his or her own age range," says Nagasimha G Rao, a child rights activist.

Experts note that education is one of the strongest safeguards against child labour. At its core, the Right to Education Act recognises that education empowers children to live with dignity and break free from cycles of poverty and inequality.

"The system also has provisions like midday meals to keep children in school. But outcomes need to be consistent to rebuild public trust," adds Rao. A more flexible model that accounts for language diversity can also help children on the margins access education.

When prolonged absence is recorded in schools, "there is a need to follow up with children early. Continued absence can be a precursor to child labour, child marriage, or trafficking," says Rao. Effective rehabilitation hinges on coordination between schools, child welfare committees, the police, and the labour department.

Following up with children who are out of school is key to prevention. "If the child has been out of school for less than five months, he or she can continue on the prescribed track. Rehabilitation of children absent for longer becomes more complex," says Kavita Ratna, executive director of the Concerned for Working Children.

In 2019, the Karnataka High Court directed the Karnataka State Attendance Authority to notify parents if children had been out of school for two weeks or more.

"The authority must first persuade parents, then notify them, fine them, and issue a notice to them. It must share the progress of bringing children back to school with department officials every week," the order stated. At the stage of prolonged absenteeism, however, many of these mechanisms fail to function.

Occupational hazards

Migrant children, many of whom are engaged in child labour, become difficult to trace once absorbed into the workforce. Within these spaces, they encounter acute risks. Domestic labour, often perceived as benign, is in fact among the most opaque and unregulated forms of employment.

"Young girls are routinely kept as 'helpers' in the house and remain indoors for most of the day. Here, they face the risk of routine physical, mental, and even sexual abuse. This type of work is very difficult to regulate, and few people notice or even complain," explains Muni Narayanaswamy, chairman of the Child Welfare Committee, Bengaluru Urban.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, bans the employment of children under 14 years in domestic work, categorising it as hazardous. For adolescents between 15 and 18, the Act permits work under specific conditions, including rest hours.

Employers are also required to notify inspectors about the engagement of an adolescent worker. However, in practice, families who employ children often do so informally and rarely notify the labour department.

"Are these children being provided the minimum wage for their work? Are they allowed to go to school? Do they have the chance to play? If not — and in most cases they are not — this constitutes bonded labour," says Rao.

Cost of child labour

Four out of 10 children globally are involved in hazardous work, according to the ILO. In India, this often means working in brick kilns, exposure to pesticides in agriculture, street hawking, waste picking, or long hours in garages and small factories.

"In many pockets, children are now pushed into informal, hidden, and unregulated jobs — domestic help, small workshops, delivery support, even gig-based tasks," says Suneel. The work is less visible but more exploitative, with longer hours, weaker safety protocols, and little accountability, he adds. Children involved in informal recycling, for instance, are two and a half times more likely to suffer injury and preventable disease than the national average.

Many children who are rescued from seemingly 'safe' workplaces need weeks or months before they trust people enough to recount their stories. Even children like Meera, who were proactive in their own rescues, require months to reconcile with their experiences and resume daily life after being placed in childcare institutions, explains Lakshapathi.

Road ahead

Addressing socio-economic risk factors is central to tackling child labour, but enforcement against those who employ children is equally vital.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act provides for penalties, including imprisonment of up to two years and fines of up to Rs 50,000. Yet, enforcement tells a very different story. According to the Karnataka State Child Labour Eradication Project Society, over the past nine years, fewer than 11% of registered child labour cases ended in the conviction of employers.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act also criminalises those who exploit children, carrying penalties of up to five years' rigorous imprisonment and fines as high as Rs 1 lakh. The police are also empowered to book cases under Section 143 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) — for the trafficking of a person.

"Once the investigation of the case is completed, officers must file a chargesheet under the Child Labour Act, Section 143 of the BNS and other sections of the Juvenile Justice Act," says C K Baba, Superintendent of Police, Bengaluru Rural. When the case is chargesheeted under only sections 14 and 14A of the Child Labour Act, it is processed by labour courts. These courts impose penalties for first-time offenders up to Rs 50,000 and for second-time offenders up to Rs 5 lakh.

To ensure that there are stricter penalties for repeat offenders, cases must be booked under all three laws. "This will ensure that repeat offenders are prosecuted to the full extent," he says. Many parents under economic pressure also settle outside of court, which may contribute to reduced convictions.

When prosecutions succeed, they can break cycles of exploitation. Rescue operations followed by justice not only hold offenders accountable but also open doors to rehabilitation. For instance, although Meera's future once seemed bleak, she now lives in a hostel, attends school, and has even passed Class 10. "The recovery is tough, but she is doing it and progress is underway," says Lakshapathi.

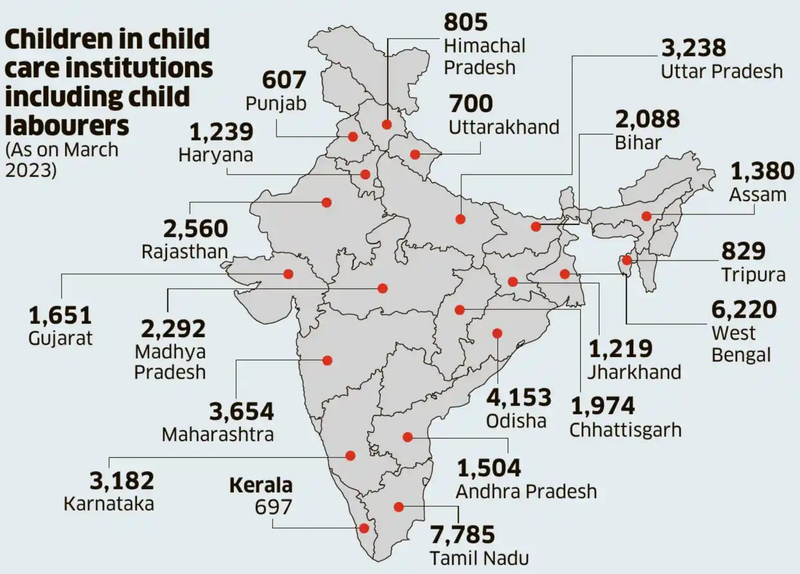
Meera's case shows how powerful these interventions can be. Rescue followed by justice allows a child to return to education and safety. When employers go unpunished, however, families receive the message that suffering has no consequence, and the cycle continues. As Rao points out, protecting children cannot rest with one actor alone. "When we think of the welfare of children, we need to think of them as if inside a triangle of care involving the parents, the community, and the government. We cannot think of ourselves as exempt from acting and intervening to the benefit of a child," he says.

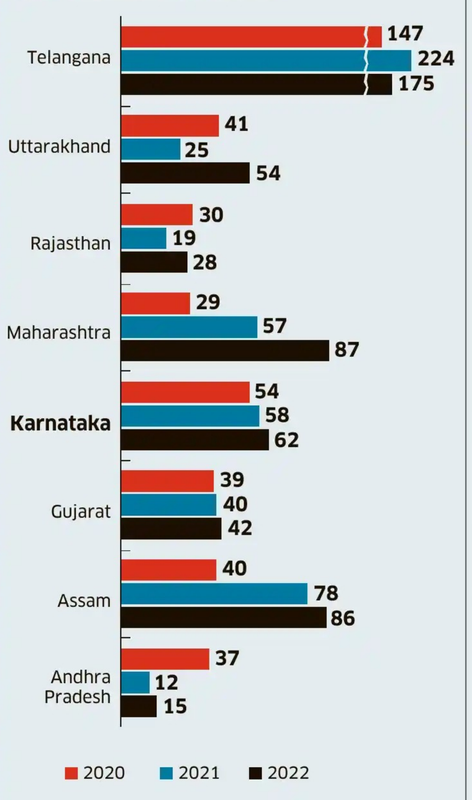
For laws and rescues to have lasting impact, they must be reinforced by families who feel supported, communities that refuse to look away, and a state that tackles the structural inequalities driving child labour.

*(*Names changed to protect privacy)*

LOST CHILDHOOD

- **Economic hardship, poverty, conflict, migration, displacement** and **communal riots** are major push factors for child labour in India
- As per the **2011** Census, India has **1.01 crore** working children in the age group of **5-14 years**.
- **Pencil Portal** launched in **2017** has a complaint corner through which online complaints regarding child labour can be filed by anybody
- **The National Child Labour Project (1988) (NCLP)** aims to eliminate child labour, rehabilitate children through education and training. It has now been subsumed under the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan**.




Extent of child labour in India
(No. of cases registered)
Telangana 147 224 175
Uttarakhand 41 25 54
Rajasthan 30 19 28
Maharashtra 29 57 87
Karnataka 54 58 62
Gujarat 39 40 42
Assam 40 78 86
Andhra Pradesh 37 12 15
2020 2021 2022

What does the Act say?

- **Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986:** Prohibits child labour in hazardous occupations and regulates work in other sectors.
- **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016:** Completely prohibits employing children under 14 years except in family-run enterprises when it does not affect schooling. Adolescents (14-18 years) are prohibited from working in hazardous industries. They can work in non-hazardous industries for not more than six hours a day, alongside two hours of schooling.

Child labourers rehabilitated under NCLP

Year	No. of children rescued	Budgetory allocation (in Cr)	Funds utilised (in Cr)
2019-20	54,894	78.00	77.47
2020-21	58,289	49.00	41.19
2021-22	18,137	20.00	18.45
2022-23	13,761	20.0	11.20

Major occupations where children are prohibited from helping family:

- Port, automobile/fabrication workshops, garages,
- Handloom/powerloom industry, cloth printing/dyeing, cotton ginning, wool cleaning
- Domestic workers or servants
- Dhabas (roadside eateries), restaurants, hotels, motels, resorts
- Diving
- Circus
- Shoe, shellac, soap/detergent, agarbatti/ jute/coir manufacturing
- Building and construction industry
- Lime kilns
- Processes in agriculture where tractors, threshing and harvesting machines are used and chaff cutting
- Rag picking and scavenging
- Mechanised fishing
- Massage parlours, gyms, recreational centres, and medical facilities

Child labour in Karnataka

Year	Inspections carried out	Children rescued	Violations detected	Convictions	Fine imposed
2020	6757	172	107	4	Rs 1.4L
2021	43937	315	158	31	Rs 5.07L
2022	23109	581	200	24	Rs 6.32L
2023	39001	707	414	15	Rs 7.2L
2024	41652	781	556	-	-
2025*	13705	205	127	-	-

Source: Karnataka Labour Dept, CRY, LS Unstarred Question No 3447, RS Unstarred Question No 2336, 252, PIB, Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, National Crime Records Bureau

COMPILED BY **DIVYASHRI MUDAKAVI** DH GRAPHIC: **GURU PRASATH R**

Time to implement the UNCRC in full measure

VASUDEVA SHARMA N V

In 2016, the Indian government amended the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, to include the term 'adolescents' and prohibited employing them (aged 14 to 18 years) in hazardous occupations.

The amendment also enforced a total ban on employing children below 14 in any occupation, hazardous or otherwise, while regulating working conditions for adolescents in non-hazardous sectors.

In 2017, India ratified two long-pending International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions: the Minimum Age Convention (Number 138), which sets the minimum age for entering the labour force, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (Number 182), which calls for prohibiting and eliminating the most exploitative forms of child labour.

Although India signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992, it has retained its reservation to Article 32, which deals with ending child labour and preventing economic exploitation.

It may be time for India to withdraw this reservation and declare a full commitment to UNCRC implementation.

Enduring issue

Children are employed illegally in agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, animal husbandry, poultry, brick kilns, beedi and agarbatti units, mines, embroidery, glass manufacturing, waste collection and segregation (including e-waste), and other small-scale industries.

Child labour remains widespread across India, from Maharashtra to West Bengal, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In the Bihar-Jharkhand belt, child labour in mica and coal mining is well documented.

Elsewhere, children continue to work in small eateries, as domestic helps, or as seasonal migrant labourers in agriculture.

This indicates that National and State Child Labour Project (NCLP/SCLP) schools have either shut down or been severely weakened due to inadequate funding.

Coordinated efforts needed

Child labour in India must also be viewed through the lens of class and caste, as most affected children come from scheduled castes, tribes and minority communities, leaving them at risk of being excluded from development.

In many agrarian regions, children, especially girls, are still ferried to distant fields early in the morning. Though often enrolled in schools, they are missing their education in practice.

These issues can be addressed only through coordinated efforts by local governments and departments of education, social welfare, labour, police and transport, in partnership with NGOs.

The Campaign Against Child Labour, a consortium of NGOs, advocates extending the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, to cover children up to 18 years of age, ensuring 12 years of free and compulsory education.

This extension is essential to eliminate child labour in line with the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and international conventions. Alternatively, a unified law integrating the RTE Act and the Child Labour Act is needed.

(Vasudeva Sharma N V is the executive director of Child Rights Trust)

Have your say

To express your opinion, e-mail us at: insight@deccanherald.co.in

Marriage at crossroads, from Page 1

The law should hold space for both endurance and autonomy

In 2022, the Kerala High Court lamented that "use and throw" consumerism had crept into matrimonial relationships, warning that younger generations see marriage as "an evil" to be avoided. Such language reveals a broader judicial pattern: Preserving the stability of marriage by reaffirming traditional roles, particularly for women. While stability is a legitimate goal, it should not come at the expense of equality or personal dignity. Endurance is one virtue; autonomy is another. The law must hold space for both.

The Supreme Court is replete with examples of emerging judicial thought on marriage. In *A Jayachandra vs Aneel Kaur* case in 2004, the court spoke of Hindu marriage as a *samskar*, a sacred union conceived to join together two souls in love, affection and mutual care. This case concerned a long-drawn matrimonial dispute between two professionals, with mutual allegations of cruelty and desertion. The court, while noting breakdowns of marriages as real and complex, simultaneously invoked the philosophical ideal of marriage drawing on the principle laid down in *Dastane vs Dastane* case in 1975, in which the SC observed that the foundation of a sound marriage lies in tolerance, adjustment, and mutual respect and "The ideal couple or a mere ideal one will probably have no occasion to go to Matrimonial Court."

The Apex Court in *Dolly Rani vs Manish Kumar Chanchal* case in 2024 emphasised that a Hindu marriage is not a ceremonial or commercial transaction but a solemn event establishing the status of husband and wife and laying the foundation for an evolving family, the basic unit of Indian society. The court further observed that the mutual promises and oaths exchanged in marriage are intended to create a lifelong commitment and adherence to this commitment can reduce marital breakdowns and the resultant need for judicial intervention. By framing marriage in terms of both social significance and personal responsibility, the judgment foregrounds the aspirational ideal of marital fidelity and enduring partnership.

Cultural morality

Women have always been considered the moral centre of marital fidelity, expected to bear the burden if necessary and to engage in self-sacrifice for the honour of the family. The underpinning ideals cast men only rarely.

This asymmetry threatens Article 14, the guarantee of equality, and Article 21, the guarantee of dignity, under the Constitution. In *Joseph Shine vs Union of India* in 2018 and *Shafin Jahan vs Asokan K M* in 2018, the Supreme Court underscored individual autonomy as a crucial aspect of intimate and marital relationships. However, matrimonial jurisprudence often perpetuates the same traditional gender stereotypes as society: valourising endurance instead of choice, duty instead of desire.

Thus, courts have become the means of maintaining cultural morality by holding women responsible for carrying the society forward while simultaneously limiting their autonomy.

The conflict between constitutional rights and cultural morality permeates into broader societal structures. Despite faster urbanisation and greater economic empowerment of women, marriage in the country is still constrained by caste, religion and family parameters. Inter-caste marriage is still anathema to the Indian social order.

According to the 2011 Census, only 6% of Indian marriages are inter-caste, indicating the continued limitations on freedom of choice. Sociologist Anthony Giddens' idea of "pure relationships" signifies partnerships based on emotional give-and-take rather than on obligations or procreation, a model now finding precedence in India.

Delayed marriages, divorce cases and cohabitation point to these new norms where the right to make a choice and not just duty form the basis of marital legitimacy.

This evolution of social reality finds an uneven reflection in the judiciary. While some courts, just like in the case of Basant Kumar Dwivedi, lay emphasis on pragmatism and interpersonal factors, others, like Narmada Jena, lean towards endurance and sacrificial importance limiting the agency of women.

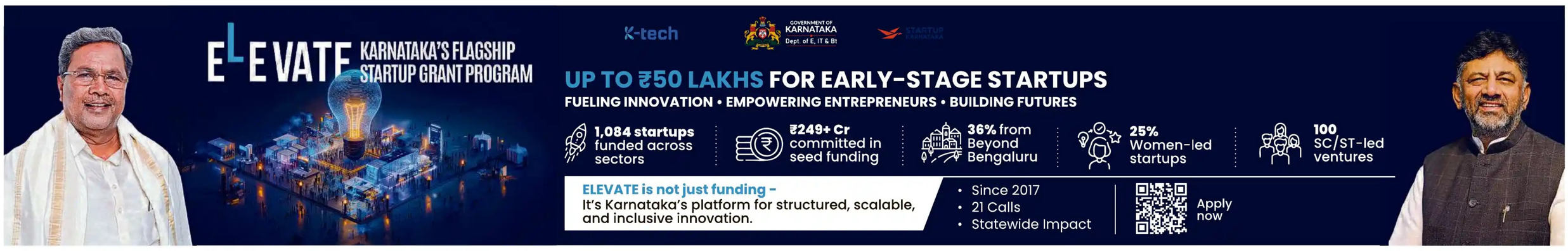
Thus, a paradox arises in jurisprudence where constitutional courts in some cases affirm the autonomous right of the individuals, while local culture sets the boundaries of autonomy in matrimonial affairs.

Marriage in India today stands at a crossroads. One side stresses permanence, duty and sacrament; the other, equality, autonomy and negotiation. They should never be mutually exclusive.

The real strength of marriage in 21st-century India will not lie in enforcing a single script for every so-called "ideal spouse" justified by the scripture.

The strength will lie, instead, in allowing couples to negotiate their own ideal set of mutual care, respect, and freedom of choice.

(Jisu Ketan Pattanaik is assistant professor of Sociology and Sumit Kumar Singh is research assistant and student at the National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi)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Complainant arrested in Dharmasthala 'mass burial' case

Sent to 12-day SIT custody after evasive replies about skull; charged with perjury

NAINA J A & PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
MANGALURU/BENGALURU, DHNS

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Saturday arrested the complainant-witness in the Dharmasthala mass burial case and produced him before the JMFC court in Belthangady, which remanded him in 12 days SIT custody.

The primary grounds on which he was arrested were perjury, sources aware of the development said on Saturday.

He was arrested following several hours of questioning. His identity has been withheld as he is still under witness protection, sources said.

Sources aware of the development revealed that the arrest was in connection with a skull he submitted before the court in Belthangady when he recorded his statement under Section 183 of BNSS in July. The state government subsequently set up the SIT to probe the allegations.

The man had alleged that between 1995 and 2014, he was forced to bury several bodies, mainly of young women, some even minors, who appeared to have been sexually assaulted and murdered at the pilgrimage town on the banks of the Nethravathi river in Dakshina Kannada.

To prove his point, he had appeared with a skull he claimed was that of a woman he had previously buried and exhumed weeks before his appearance before the local police.

"The investigation, however, found inconsistencies in his statements, including when, where and how the body was buried and exhumed, and no evidence was found to back the claims about the skull he produced before the court. This is also supported by forensic evidence," well-placed sources told *DH*.

During questioning on Friday, he is said to have admitted that the skull did not belong to the body he had buried. Following this, SIT officials took him into custody. Unlike on previous days when he was allowed to leave with his legal team after questioning, officials took him into their custody on Friday night.

After his arrest, he was taken for a medical examination on Saturday morning and produced before additional judge Vijayendra T H at the Belthangady JMFC Court. After the court remanded him in SIT custody, the SIT then escorted him back to their Belthangady office accompanied by SPs Jitendra Kumar Dayama and C A Simon.

An SIT source said, "The complainant-witness was evasive on his information about the skull and the location. Upon further questioning, he admitted it was not the skull of the body he had buried. We sought his custody for further investigation, which we got for 12 days till September 3. We will investigate where he obtained the skull and its background."

"We have sought his custody only to gather more information about the skull he produced. Investigations related to the earlier exhumation of sites shown by him will also continue," sources added.

The sources refused to confirm or deny the rumours that the complainant-witness had claimed a conspiracy by some individuals who had forced him to come forward with the sensational claims, as the probe was still in progress.

Earlier, the SIT had conducted exhumation at 17 out of 18 sites in Dharmasthala village, which the complainant witness had shown. Human remains were traced in two locations. The remains have been sent to the FSL. The SIT has so far questioned former panchayat staff of Dharmasthala, sanitation workers alleged to have assisted the complainant-witness, and doctors who had conducted post mortems.

The complainant-witness being taken to the Belthangady court on Saturday. DH PHOTO

BJP demands NIA probe

The BJP, loaded with fresh ammunition to attack the Congress government after the arrest of the witness-complainant in the Dharmasthala case, demanded a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to expose "conspirators" and "foreign hands".
Details on Page 7

Heggade welcomes arrest

Veerendra Heggade, Dharmadhikari of Dharmasthala Manjunatha Swamy Temple, on Saturday welcomed the arrest of the complainant in a case involving allegations of multiple murders, rapes and burials in the temple town, saying that the "truth is beginning to come out."

Sujatha's neighbours in disbelief, Page 7

DHARMASTHALA CASE TIMELINE

June 22: 2 B'luru advocates claim to have met a sanitation worker who alleged he was forced to bury many bodies in temple town

July 3: Sanitation worker files a complaint with Dharmasthala police, an FIR is registered

July 10: Complainant gets protection under Witness Protection scheme

July 11: Complainant appears before Belthangady court, presents skeletal remains of a body

July 14: State Women's Commission writes seeks an SIT to probe mass burial claims.

July 15: Sujata Bhat alleges her daughter Ananya had gone missing in Dharmasthala in 2003

July 19: SIT formed

July 28: Complainant identifies 13 burial spots

July 29: SIT begins digging the spots

July 31: SIT finds skeletal remains at spot 6

Aug 2: Second complainant, Jayanth T, claims to know where a minor girl's body was buried

Aug 4: SIT finds about 100 bones and skull near 11th spot

Aug 11: One Indravati approaches SIT seeking reinvestigation into her sister Padmalatha's death 39 years ago

Aug 13: 2 more individuals claim to have witnessed burial of bodies

Aug 23: Complainant witness arrested on grounds of perjury

EAM: Trade, Russian oil, Pak mediation top issues in US ties

Minister says India has certain red lines for trade pact

NEW DELHI, PTI

India has "red lines" in its negotiations for a trade deal with the US and it will stand firm in protecting interests of farmers and small producers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday, days before additional US tariffs on Indian goods are set to take effect.

He also sounded critical of the US for targeting New Delhi's energy ties with Moscow and wondered why the same yardstick has not been applied to China and the European Union, the largest importers of Russian crude oil and Russian LNG, respectively.

The external affairs minister, speaking at an event, also made it clear that India does not accept mediation in its relations with Pakistan and there has been a national consensus over it for more than 50 years.

His comments came in the face of President Donald Trump's repeated claims that he defused the India-Pakistan military conflict in May.

Jaishankar flagged trade and tariff, procurement of Russian crude oil and Washington's assertion on the conflict as the three main issues India has with the US at present.

He said US President Trump's way of dealing with the world is a very major departure from the traditional way of doing so and the entire world is facing this issue.

The external affairs minister said trade is "really the major issue" between the two countries, adding India has certain "red lines" and that the negotiations for the proposed trade are underway.

The external affairs minister also responded to repeated allegations by Trump administration officials that India is "profiteering" by buying discounted Russian crude oil and then selling refined petroleum products at premium prices.

"The arguments used to target India have not been applied to the largest oil importer, which is China, has not been applied to the largest LNG importer, which is the European Union," he said.

The external affairs minister indicated that Washington's claim on the India-Pakistan conflict is the third issue New Delhi has with the US.

"For more than 50 years, there is a national consensus that we do not accept mediation in our relations with Pakistan," he said.

STICKING POINTS

- Jaishankar says trade, Russian crude oil, mediation in relations with Pak main issues in ties with US
- Minister says India firm on protecting interests of farmers and small producers
- Says Russia-European Union trade is bigger than India-Russia trade
- Asserts that there is national consensus on not accepting mediation in ties with Pak

"We have not had a US President who has conducted foreign policy as publicly as the current one.
S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister

Postal services to US temporarily suspended

NEW DELHI, PTI: Postal services to the US have been temporarily suspended as the US-bound air carriers have denied carrying shipments due to lack of clarity in new norms issued by the American customs department, Ministry of Communications said on Saturday.

However, services will continue for letters, documents and gift items up to $100.

Under an Executive Order issued by the US administration on July 30, goods valued above $100 will be subject to customs duties in America with effect from August 29.

According to the Executive Order, transport carriers delivering shipments through the international postal network, or other "qualified parties" approved by the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), are required to collect and remit duties on postal shipments.

The Department of Posts is offering refunds of postage to customers whose articles could not be dispatched.

"Exempt categories will continue to be accepted and conveyed to the US, subject to further clarifications from CBP and USPS," the statement said.

Trump aide Sergio Gor next US envoy to India

WASHINGTON, PTI: Sergio Gor, the White House personnel director and a loyal member of President Donald Trump's inner circle, has been nominated as the next American envoy to India.

President Trump, announcing the nomination of 38-year-old Gor to the key ambassadorial position, said he will also serve as the special envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs.

"For the most populous region in the World, it is important that I have someone I can fully trust to deliver on my agenda and help us 'Make America Great Again'," Trump said. **Page 10**

ED arrests Cong MLA in betting case

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday arrested Karnataka Congress MLA KC Veerendra Puppy in connection with an illegal online and offline betting case.

Puppy, the legislator from Chitradurga, was arrested in Gangtok, Sikkim, and produced before a local court, ED sources said, following large-scale raids across the country on Friday. Investigators have obtained a transit remand and the MLA will be brought to Bengaluru for further probe.

Veerendra Puppy

After the raids, the ED recovered Rs 12 crore in cash, including Rs 1 crore in foreign currency in the form of bundles of 100 US Dollars, 10 and 20 British pounds, 500 Dirhams and 50 and 100 Euro currency notes.

The ED had raided 31 locations in different parts of India, including Gangtok, Chitradurga District, Bengaluru, Hubballi, Jodhpur and Mumbai. In Goa, the raids focused on Puppy's Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy's Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino.

"Search has revealed that the suspect is running several online betting sites in the name of King 567, Raja 567, etc," the ED said in a statement.

▸ **ED, Page 7**

GOLDEN GLOW

Devotees transport flowers on a boat as they decorate the Golden Temple on the eve of the anniversary of the first installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in Amritsar, on Saturday. AFP

India plans to put 119 satellites in space in 15 years

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India plans to launch 119 satellites in the next 15 years besides expanding its ground station networks to have footprints in Antarctica, Chile, Alaska and Svalbard in the Arctic for the first time, officials said here on Saturday at the National Space Day celebration.

The roadmap includes 80 satellites for land and 23 for ocean and atmospheric applications. Also, there will be 16 technology demonstration satellites including homegrown platforms for dual-frequency radar mission, cloud-profiling radar mission and cloud-aerosol mission for better understanding of the earth's climate.

There will also be more deep space missions including at least five more unmanned Chandrayaan missions before an Indian sets foot on the lunar surface by 2040 along with a Mars lander mission in the next two decades.

Out of the five missions to the moon, only the next two have been approved and the first one to fly will be Chandrayaan-4, a sample return mission that is to take off by 2027: the year when the first Gaganyaan will be launched.

▸ **Satellite, Page 7**

Group Captains Angad Pratap, Shubhanshu Shukla, Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair and Ajith Krishnan pose with the first module of the 'Bharatiya Antriksh Station' in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

State likely to get more medical seats

BENGALURU DHNS: Karnataka is likely to get more seats for the ongoing medical seat counselling pool with the National Medical Commission (NMC) allowing addition of more seats.

Following the NMC's communication, the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) has issued a notice on Saturday extending commencement of second round of counselling for undergraduate medical courses from August 29.

"However, the revised schedule for the Round 2 will be published shortly," reads the communication from the MCC.
Details on Page 5

HEART HEALTH

Cardiac concerns cause uptick in ECGs at govt hospitals

DH SPECIAL

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

In just four months between April and July this financial year, nearly 2.31 lakh ECGs were performed under the Puneeth Rajkumar Hrudaya Jyothi scheme across 86 government health centres in the state, which are more than 50% of the total ECGs performed in the 2024-25 fiscal, according to data available with the health department.

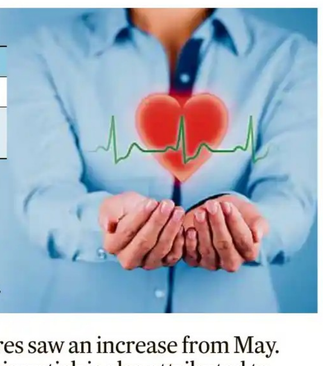
Of the 2.31 lakh ECGs, as many as 3,018 were found to be critical and eventually, 167 deaths were recorded. In 2024-25, of the 4.49 lakh ECGs performed, a total of 6,767 were found to be critical and 608 deaths were recorded.

TICKING HIGH

Year	ECGs	Critical	Deaths
2024-25	4,49,203	6,767	608
2025-26 (till July)	2,31,501	3,018	167

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART

- Adopt healthy lifestyle
- Avoid junk food
- Exercise in moderation
- Quit smoking
- Sleep at least seven hours
- Manage stress through yoga, meditation, etc.



The scheme — launched in 2023 in memory of popular actor Puneeth Rajkumar who died due to a sudden heart attack — is being implemented across 86 government hospitals in the state. It aims at providing timely treatment during cardiac arrest.

Doctors at district and taluk levels said the number of people seeking cardiac advice at government health centres saw an increase from May.

This uptick is also attributed to the panic following media reports on sudden deaths due to heart attack, especially among youngsters.

"The number of patients showing up at our outpatient department definitely increased after the news reports. Earlier, at Bengaluru centre, we used to receive close to 1,600 patients a day and that went up to 2,000. At Mysuru it went up from 750 to around 1,000 and in Kalaburagi it went up from 450 to 600 patients. However, from the first week of August, the number has gradually come down to the normal figures," said Dr Ravindranath K S, director, Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences.

Even though the number of people visiting cardiology departments has now come down compared to May and June, it is still high compared to the last few years, cardiologists said.

"Owing to the increase in awareness, the numbers are still high. Now, many patients with even slight arm or neck pain approach us to rule out any cardiac issue," said PRLN Prasad, interventional cardiologist at a private hospital in Kengeri.

▸ **ECG, Page 7**

U'khand: Woman dies, village under debris after cloudburst

LUCKNOW, DHNS: A woman was killed and two others were missing after a village in Uttarakhand was hit by a cloudburst late on Friday night.

The cloudburst in Tharali tehsil, Chamoli district, sent a torrent of debris through the village, burying houses, vehicles and shops. Chamoli district magistrate Sandeep Tewari said that the cloudburst had caused huge damage in the area. A woman was killed in the incident.

Reports said that Tharali market, Kotdeep, and some other areas had suffered extensive damage and residential areas and shops were buried under the debris.

Eleven people were injured and were being provided medical assistance.
Details on Page 8

PLOT POLITICS Lessons from Nagarathpete forgotten? Debate heats up over small plot plan

Safety or shortcuts? BBMP's big bet on easing OC rules

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

On July 17, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) wrote to the state government proposing to exempt buildings constructed on plots smaller than 1,200 square feet from obtaining occupancy certificates (OC). The proposal — which requires amendments to the law — was made on the grounds that site inspections were overburdening staff, leading to delays and public harassment.

On average, the BBMP's eight zones issue about 4,000 new building plan approvals every year for plots not exceeding 1,200 square feet. These plots are also covered under Nambike Nakshe, an automated online software that approves the draft sketch on the day of submission and provides final approval within 15 days.

Beyond simplifying building approvals, the civic body is now pushing to eliminate the requirement of obtaining OCs once the construction is completed. The BBMP has asked the state government to amend Section 241(7) of the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024 to allow the exemption.

The first major discussion on this proposal was held on July 3, in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and attended by several ministers. The meeting was reportedly called to find solutions for those affected by the Supreme Court's December 2024 order, which mandated that no civic services — water, electricity, or sanitation — be provided to buildings in violation of norms or lacking an occupancy certificate.

While the SC ruling was seen as a relief for Bengaluru, which has long grappled with rampant illegal construction amid lack of enforcement from authorities, it also affected property owners who had built as per the rules but were denied OCs simply because their plots were 'B' khata properties. The BBMP does not issue OCs for B khata sites, a policy deadlock that needs a separate fix.

Following the July 3 meeting, senior government officials began drafting the next course of action. They noted ground-plus-two or stilt-plus-three floor buildings on 1,200 sqft plots can be exempted from obtaining the occupancy certificate. Illegal constructions, they clarified, would continue to face consequences under the law. They also agreed with the BBMP's view that inspections to verify whether the approved building plans matched the final structure were causing delays as the staff were overburdened with various responsibilities.

In addition, the civic body is preparing a proposal to increase permissible setback deviations from the existing 5% to 25%, with penalties levied on violators.

BBMP has proposed exempting buildings on plots under 1,200 sqft from occupancy certificates.
DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Nagarathpete in the making?

Citizen activists fighting against illegal constructions have warned that relaxing such regulatory checks could turn all of Bengaluru into Nagarathpete — a congested neighbourhood with narrow lanes, towering structures and no setbacks.

They recalled two recent tragedies, one in Wilson Garden and another in Nagarathpete. While the tragedies are not directly linked to building violations, activists argued that such incidents demonstrate how densely packed houses without setbacks can turn accidents into large-scale neighbourhood disasters and also pose challenges for rescue operations. In Nagarathpete, the fire personnel had a harrowing time not just in accessing the fire-hit building but also climbing the narrow stairs.

Smriti Tipirneni, an advocate residing in Cooke Town, recalled that the stretch where she lives has multiple buildings that appear to have exceeded the 21-metre height rule without securing the no-objection certificate from the fire department. "Even after complaints, no action followed. With the government now introducing further relaxations, including in setbacks that are critical for fire access, there is a real risk of replicating the safety failures of Nagarathpete across the city,' she said.

When BBMP had taken up a city-wide survey earlier this year, it had found that two out of every third under-construction building it surveyed did not take the mandatory approvals to start the work. On top of this, it also found setback and height violations in 1,171 buildings. Even though the civic body has chalked out a three-month timeline to act against the violators, it has not been successful on the ground owing to multiple factors including ligitaionts.

R. Rajagopalan, convener of the BLR Coalition, reiterated that on small plots, unscrupulous builders already raise 7–8 floors illegally to meet demand for rentals and PG accommodations. "The recent collapses were stark reminders of why stricter enforcement is essential. Yet, promises have reduced to lip service, with lives already lost and quickly forgotten. Such amendments will only accelerate urban decay, worsen heat islands, and embolden violators," he added. He also argued that granting amnesty to violators by amending the law would be ultra vires, since the Akrama Sakrama scheme is still stayed by the Supreme Court. "Exempting occupancy certificates will remove the only check ensuring buildings are compliant and safe for occupation. Public safety cannot be overstated," he said.

Body of a woman found in Lalbagh lake

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Siddapura police on Saturday recovered the body of a woman from Lalbagh lake in southern Bengaluru.

The police were alerted around 6.45 am by guards near the West Gate, who noticed the body floating. The woman is suspected to have died by suicide.

The deceased, identified as Jenisha Nath, 22, a house help, was found wearing a nightdress. Police said she was suspected to be suffering from post-partum depression (PPD). She was married to Navnath Raj, a security guard, four years ago and lived in the Sarjapur area.

Investigations revealed that Jenisha escaped from Vani Vilas Hospital around 4 am, about 3.2 km from Lalbagh. She had given birth to a baby boy on August 16, who was suffering from a liver-related ailment, police said. They suspect she was upset and under PPD, which may have led her to take the extreme step.

Police said she entered the park around 5.30 am, and security guards let her in, assuming she was a morning walker. Her body was found floating an hour later, around 6.30 am. Police alerted her family, who were about to file a missing complaint, and the body was identified.

"There were no visible injuries on her body, and death by suicide is suspected," a police officer told *DH*. "The body has been sent for post-mortem, and the report is awaited. It is yet to be clear if she drowned or consumed something. An Unnatural Death Report (UDR) has been registered."

Honorarium of 72 BBMP guest teachers put on hold

BENGALURU, DHNS : The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has withheld the honorarium of around 72 guest teachers and lecturers appointed to teach at BBMP schools and colleges.

The civic body has cited that 35 of them do not qualify for the post, while another 37 have failed to achieve at least 50% results in the subjects they taught over the last three years.

According to the order, many of the teachers held a BA, BEd qualification instead of the required DEd or TCH.

Many felt it was unfair of the civic body to take such a decision after appointing them and availing their services.

However, BBMP officials said they had clearly mentioned the eligibility criteria from the beginning.

"The teachers are sourced from the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) or the College Development Committee (CDC). We had clearly laid out the eligibility criteria at the start. However, when we received the list for verification, we realised that 35 of them had not met the criteria, and hence the decision was made," said Dilip, BBMP Assistant Commissioner (Education).

He added that during the appointment, officials had also informed the teachers that they must ensure a good pass percentage in their subjects.

"It is an average of three years, and we expect at least 50% results in their subject," he said.

Resort worker booked for peeping into women's washroom

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Ramanagara police arrested a resort staffer who was caught peeping into the women's washroom, officials said on Saturday.

The arrested man has been identified as Sandeep, who was booked by the Ramanagara Rural police under Section 77 (voyeurism) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

According to the FIR, the 27-year-old victim, who worked with a private firm, was at the Shilhaandra Resort in Padarahalli with 20 friends on a day trip on August 20.

She went to the washroom and, since there were no tissues inside, came out and asked Sandeep, who got her some from the bar counter. When she entered the washroom and got ready to use it, she noticed someone peeping from the adjacent washroom and raised an alarm.

Sandeep was caught when he tried to escape and was later arrested by the police. The woman also alleged that other staff members supported Sandeep, locked the resort gates to prevent them from leaving, and refused to show the CCTV footage. Further investigation is underway, police said.

Bengaluru's garment boom leaves a toxic trail

Fragmented data, weak policies push most fabric waste into landfills or flames

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru, the "garment capital" of India, is facing a severe and largely unmanaged textile waste crisis, with the city generating an estimated 5,000 tonnes of fabric waste annually.

A new study by the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) reveals that Bengaluru is struggling to cope with the sheer volume of discarded clothes and fabric scraps, highlighting an urgent need to shift towards a circular economy. The findings were presented at a recent workshop attended by industry leaders, policymakers, and academics.

One of the most significant hurdles identified by researchers S Manasi, Channamma Kambara, and Mrinalini Goswami is the lack of a unified database for textile waste. Different government agencies such as the Department of Handlooms and Textiles (DHT) and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) maintain fragmented records, but their focus is on regulatory compliance, not waste management. This disconnect creates a "missing link" in governance, leaving a large portion of the problem unaddressed.

The study found that while large export-oriented factories manage their waste more effectively, smaller local units and thousands of tailoring shops dump most of their waste into the regular trash.

Wasteful practices

The ISEC report also sheds light on what happens to the waste that is collected. About 40% of Bengaluru's textile waste is sent to Tiruppur and Panipat for recycling. Another 20% is downcycled locally into products like mattresses and dolls. However, these items have a short lifespan of 8-10 years, after which they are often burned or end up in landfills, contributing to pollution. A particularly alarming finding is the unsegregated mixing of hazardous industrial cotton waste with regular trash. The study points out the high environmental cost of this linear model, noting that over 75% of waste is burnt, releasing toxic emissions.

This informal sector, largely comprising women, handles the arduous work of sorting and managing this waste. Yet, these workers often operate in unsafe conditions, lacking basic facilities, safety gear, and social support.

PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

Roadmap for circularity in waste management

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) stressed the urgency of addressing this issue. With Bengaluru generating roughly 6,000 tonnes of waste daily, much of it unsegregated, the need to integrate textile waste into existing municipal systems is foremost.

- **Structured collection systems:** Implementing source segregation and formal systems for collecting textile waste.
- **Technological investment:** Investing in sorting and recycling facilities, including AI-based systems.
- **Policy and regulation:** Developing a dedicated national textile waste management policy and implementing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks to hold manufacturers accountable.
- **Data harmonisation:** Creating a reliable, harmonised database to inform effective policy-making.

Child left behind on Purple Line, reunited later

BENGALURU, DHNS: A mother and child were separated on the Namma Metro Purple Line on Saturday, causing panic among commuters. A middle-aged woman boarded the metro with her five-year-old child at Mysore Road around 1.30 pm to travel to Magadi Road. However, the crowd at Magadi Road station ended up separating the woman from her child, leaving the child behind on the train. The two were later reunited at Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna station with the help of fellow passengers.

HC upholds compulsory retirement of a senior civil judge for misconduct

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka High Court has confirmed the order of compulsory retirement from service, imposed upon a senior civil judge. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Joshi dismissed the writ appeal filed by K M Gangadhar while observing that there was no infirmity in the procedure adopted in the enquiry proceedings.

Gangadhar had joined the judicial service as a civil judge (Junior division) in February 1995. He was promoted as a civil judge (Senior division) in 2005. While he was functioning as a civil judge (Senior division), XIII Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bengaluru City, a complaint was filed by Dr B Indumathi, alleging that the judge was interfering in investigation being conducted by the police in a complaint lodged by her against one Anasuya (Anasuyamma). It is stated that Anasuya is the judge's sister. The complaint alleged that the judge had threatened the police officials with dire consequences if they called Anasuya to the police station.

On April 27, 2011, Articles of Charges were issued to Gangadhar and the Registrar (Vigilance) was appointed as the enquiring authority. The enquiry officer had examined the complainant, the concerned police inspector, H T Jayaramaiah, as well as the judge. The enquiry found that the judge threatened the police inspector and the report said that the charges against the judge were established.

On October 1, 2012, in exercise of powers conferred under Rule 8(vi) of the Karnataka Civil Services (Classification, Control & Appeal) Rules, 1957 (the CCA Rules), Gangadhar was given compulsory retirement.

Gangadhar moved the division bench after a single bench dismissed his petition in February 2025. He contended that the single bench had not examined his explanation, which, according to him, should have been accepted.

The division bench noted that the evidence established that he had threatened the police officials regarding the investigations. The bench also pointed out that a phone call was made on August 20, 2007, wherein the judge was heard abusing and threatening the police officials.

"We are unable to accept the said contention. We find no infirmity with either the procedure adopted nor find that the punishment imposed is highly disproportionate. It is well-settled that the punishment imposed pursuant to a domestic enquiry cannot be interfered with unless it is established that i) the enquiry or the punishment imposed is contrary to law; ii) the procedure adopted is not in conformity with the principles of natural justice or any other law; iii) the penalties or disciplinary proceedings are vitiated by mala fides or extraneous considerations; iv) the finding of misconduct is perverse and unreasonable; or v) the punishment imposed is excessively disproportionate," the division bench said.

National Space Day marked with events at planetarium

Around 300 students took part in the National Space Day festivities at Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium.
PHOTO: JAWAHARLAL NEHRU PLANETARIUM

BENGALURU, DHNS

On the occasion of National Space Day, Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium hosted multiple events on Saturday.

The event began with an inaugural session where B R Guruprasad, Director of the Planetarium, explained the significance of National Space Day, while Chief Guest B N Ramakrishna, former Director of ISTRAC and now Professor at U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), highlighted the difficulties involved in executing a complex mission like Chandrayaan-3 and the skilled work that goes into it.

This was followed by a talk on 'The Significance of Chandrayaan's Success' by the Planetarium Director.

The planetarium also organised five competitions — painting on the theme 'Indians on the Moon', Aryabhata paper model making, pick-and-speak, a quiz, and a jigsaw puzzle. About 300 students attended the event.

Class 10 girl dies by suicide

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 16-year-old girl allegedly died by suicide at her house on the outskirts of the city on Friday.

The deceased was a class 10 student. The Madanayakanahalli police have registered an Unnatural Death Report (UDR) and launched a probe.

Meanwhile, Ashok, the headmaster of the school where the deceased studied, spoke to the media and said she was a good student.

"We had no complaints about her. Since she was in class 10, as per the government directive, we conduct special classes for an extra hour," he said. Ashok urged the students to speak to parents and teachers if they face any problems and seek help.

"We will also strive to create more awareness among students," he added.

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Shoppers throng KSIC Mysore Silk outlets in Bengaluru ahead of the Gowri Ganesha festival. DH PHOTO/M A RUSHMI BENISHA

WARP-SPEED SHOPPING:

Silk saris fly off shelves before Gowri Ganesha festival

SHRADDHA S &
M A RUSHMI BENISHA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Ahead of the Gowri Ganesha festival, the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC) Mysore Silk sari outlets across Bengaluru witnessed a heavy last-minute shopping rush.

Long queues spilled onto the road in front of the KSIC Mysore Silk showroom in Jayanagar 4th Stage on Saturday. The crowd was largely due to KSIC receiving fresh stock on Saturdays, coinciding with the festival demand.

Shoppers waited patiently for hours, and shops quickly switched to a token system to monitor and regulate the overwhelming crowd. Some people waited for over two hours to grab their choicest saris.

The saris, some with exclusive designs, ranged from ₹20,000 to over ₹2 lakh depending on the design, but sold out immediately, said a shopkeeper. Varmahalakshmi, a shopper, told *DH*: "I came an hour and a half ago, but the queue is still the same. The best saris must have sold out. We will have to settle for what's left." Another shopper, who had come from Davanagere, added: "The Davanagere outlet has a heavier crowd — you can't even enter the shop there." Shanti, one of the few lucky shoppers who managed to inch closer to the entrance, quipped: "Getting a silk sari from Mysore Silks isn't for the weak. You need strong feet!"

Token system

When *DH* visited the Malleswaram store, safety signs were prominently displayed, limiting entry to five people at a time and prohibiting bags, scarves, and jackets. A clerk said the store sells out by noon every Saturday, despite receiving fresh shipments and opening at 10 am.

At the MG Road outlet, the main stock was sold out, with only basic printed saris on offer. *DH* also found that one reason for the delays was tightened security measures after high-value saris were stolen from the Jayanagar and Malleswaram showrooms on August 2 and 12, respectively. To manage the crowd and prevent further incidents, the store restricted entry to just 10 people at a time.

Experts urge registry, clinics for Huntington's patients

BENGALURU, DHNS

A conference on Huntington's Disease was held at the Nimhans Convention Centre on Saturday. Titled 'Advancing Science and Care: Unified Strategies for Huntington's Disease', it was organised by the Huntington's Disease Society of India (HDSI).

The event aimed to raise awareness about the disease by bringing together global experts, researchers, scientists, caregivers, clinicians and policymakers, said Venkateswara Rao Koushik, chairman of HDSI.

"There is so little awareness about the disease in India that it isn't even considered a rare disease. Compared to India, there is so much research happening in other countries. Several people in India are currently dealing with this ailment, but there is no registry. This needs to change," Koushik told *DH*.

The day-long conference featured talks on several topics, such as 'Mechanisms of Huntington protein transmission in the brain via two proteins', 'Genetic counselling and the family planning dilemma', and 'Living with Huntington's Disease – overcoming challenges and a wishlist for a better life'.

At the conference, HDSI put forth three key demands — inclusion of Huntington's Disease in the National Rare Disease Registry, establishment of multidisciplinary Huntington's Disease clinics in major hospitals, and creation of a dedicated Huntington's Disease patient registry.

"Families affected by Huntington's Disease face an enormous burden without adequate medical or social support. Recognition in the national rare disease framework, along with specialised clinics and a patient registry, will be a lifeline for thousands of families in India," added Koushik.

Yediyurappa contests Pocso case trial timeline

BENGALURU, PTI: Former chief minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday argued before the High Court that the one-year deadline under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act to complete a trial has not yet commenced in the case registered against him.

Section 35 of the POCSO law mandates that trials be concluded within a year of taking cognisance. However, Yediyurappa's counsel maintained that the period would begin only after charges are framed and that, in this instance, cognisance itself has been stayed.

The case stems from a complaint filed in March 2024 by a woman who alleged that Yediyurappa had inappropriately touched her minor daughter during a meeting at his residence. The FIR was registered by Bengaluru police on March 14, 2024.

Appearing for Yediyurappa, senior advocate C V Nagesh submitted that the complainant had a record of filing multiple complaints against senior officials, police officers, and even her own family members.

After Saturday's hearing, the matter was adjourned to September 2 for further arguments.

The petition is currently being heard by Justice M I Arun.

'Hospitals must have palliative care department'

Health minister says willing to review existing policy

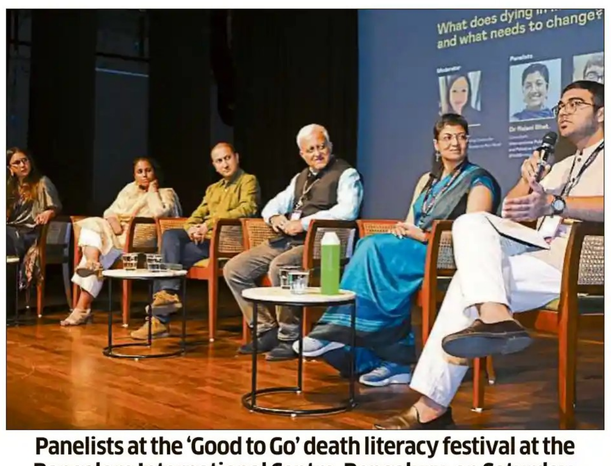
BARKHA KUMARI
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's first death literacy festival opened to a packed auditorium in Bengaluru on Saturday, drawing an audience not only from the city but also from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and even the UK. Among them were researchers exploring end-of-life experiences, a psychiatrist who noted that neither schools nor culture prepare us to face death, and many professionals working in palliative care. Several others were curious about living wills, also known as Advance Medical Directives (AMDs). It documents a person's medical treatment wishes if they are unable to communicate.

Bengaluru was a fitting choice to host 'Good To Go', a two-day festival encouraging open conversations and planning around death, with an emphasis on patients' dignity and rights. Karnataka has become the first Indian state to implement the Supreme Court's 2023 guidelines, legalising AMDs and the withdrawal of life support for terminally ill patients.

During his keynote, health minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said he didn't yet know how many in the state had drafted an AMD but was considering making one himself to inspire others.

Rao said hospitals need to adopt advance care planning practices like AMDs, as they play a key role in educating patients. He also expressed willingness to review the existing policy and address any "roadblocks" to its implementation. Responding to this, the next speaker, Dr Nagesh Simha, medical director of Karunashraya Hospice, pointed out that the palliative care policy needs a review and urged action on the virtual platform for drafting AMDs.



Panelists at the 'Good to Go' death literacy festival at the Bangalore International Centre, Bengaluru, on Saturday.
DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Busting the myth that end-of-life care planning is elitist, festival director Smriti Rana from Pallium India revealed that 40% of those in Kerala who have written their AMDs are fisherfolk and farmers. "They don't want their families spiralling into financial toxicity, their children dropping out of school, or their homes mortgaged," she explained, noting that the financial burden is often as real as the illness itself. Highlighting a paradox, she added that in India, one of the most marginalised groups in palliative care are the affluent, as the private hospitals they visit often don't offer it "because it's not profitable".

The lack of palliative care departments in hospitals, and the near absence of at-home care, came up during the panel discussion, 'What Does Dying in India Look Like and What Needs to Change?' and was echoed by the audience during the Q&A session. "We need mandatory regulations. Why can a hospital with an ICU not have a palliative care department?" asked an audience member.

The journey to India's right to die with dignity was also discussed. Consultant neurologist Dr Roop Gursahani, who assessed the Aruna Shanbaug case, a nurse left in a vegetative state for decades after a brutal assault, emphasised that "implementation requires laws" for advance care planning to be truly realised in India.

Adding to this, Hardik Dua, advocacy officer at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, explained that during the landmark Aruna Shanbaug judgement, concepts like AMDs and patient autonomy were absent; the case was linked directly to Article 21, which guarantees the right to life. The Supreme Court rulings in 2018 and 2023 have since expanded patients' rights.

Despite the grim topic, the event included moments of lightness and optimism. Organisers encouraged the audience to access a toolkit for advance care planning via a QR code. It includes templates for AMDs and healthcare attorney authorisation in languages such as Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil.

On Sunday, Day 2 of the event, a workshop on drafting AMDs and legal guidance will be held at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Dance festival: 'NAMAN 2025', 14th edition of Odissi dance festival;ccurated and presented by Nrityantar, ADA Rangamandira, JC Road, (opposite Ravindra Kalakshetra), 5 pm.

Flea market: Taara, a flea market for women, The Green Path, Malleswaram, 3 pm.

Conference: The Huntington's Disease Society, India conference; theme on 'Advancing Science and Care: Unified Strategies for Huntington's Disease' with researchers, clinicians, policymakers, patients, and caregivers, Convention Centre, NIMHANS, 10 am onwards.

Utsav: Unnati foundation presenting, 'Unnati Utsav – Gokulashtami Celebrations'; T M Krishna, Sivasri Skandaprasad, Sudha Raghunathan, Abhishek Raghuram, Smt Vishaka Hari and many others to perform, Odukathur Mutt, Gangadhar Chetty Road, Ulsoor, 6 m onwards.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	28.2°C
Minimum	21.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	68%
Sunset (Aug 24)	6:37 pm
Sunrise (Aug 25)	6:08 am
Moonrise	6:01 am
Moonset	6:47 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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Infantry Road:	Safina Plaza
Jayanagar:	Srinivasa Sagar Kalyan Mahal, 2nd block, (Near Ashoka Pillar)
Banshankari:	Sri Hari Kalyana Mantap, 30th Main, B.S.K. 3rd Stage, Near K.I.M.S. Hospital.
Bannerghatta:	Billava Bhavana, No. 63, Opp. Meenakshi Temple.
R. R Nagar:	Vasavi Mahal Kalyana Mantapa, Next To Reliance Digital,Ideal Homes I Phase.
Vijay Nagar:	Five O Gallery 17th Cross, M.C. Road, Near Vijay Nagar Bus Stop.
Rajajinagar:	Raja Rajeshwari Kalyana Mantapa, Dr. Rajkumar Road, 2nd Block, Next to Blue Hyundai Showroom.
Malleswaram:	The Canara Union, No.42, 8th Main, Canara Union Road.
Koramangala:	Apoorva International, #35A,Raheja Arcade, Opp Star Box, Bangalore -95
Basavanagudi:	Amolak Apparels, 7/3, 1st Floor, Opp Karnataka Bank, Bangaluru 560004

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1. Please bring only one home-cooked food to the location by **09:30 am** to be judged by **Oggarane Dabbi Murali.**
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4. Participants must bring their own plating, garnishing and decorating items.
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PUBLIC NOTICE

The present notice by way of reply is given in response to the Caution Notice dated 10.08.2026 given by **Mr. Taji George,** Advocate on behalf of **Mrs. Meera Patankar** and **Ms. Yamuna Patankar.** The Caution Notice is highly mischievous, misleading and in fact, vexatious. The development has been undertaken by our client **M/s. Pavithra Constructions Pvt. Ltd.,** having its office at **M/s. Pavithra Constructions Pvt. Ltd,** #0106/41, Unit 3, Second Floor, "PAVITHRA'S MITHILA", 11th Main, 11th Cross, Malleswaram, Bengaluru-560 003 (info@pavithraconstructions.in, 080-23444632), in pursuance of a registered Joint Development Agreement dated 29.07.2019 executed by both the owners i.e., Mr. Udhav D. Patankar and Dr. Jyothi Jayaprakash Reddy. The JDA dated 29.07.2019 and GPA dated 31.07.2019 are not cancelled/void as falsely claimed in the Caution Notice dated 10.08.2026. In fact, the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka vide its order dated 14.02.2023 in W.P.No.3012/2023 has given our client liberty to develop the property. The development is fully complete and the owner's share as well as the developer's share has also been demarcated. This has been taken on record by the Hon'ble High Court vide order dated 08.01.2024 in W.P.No.3012/2023. One Mr. Ajith Kumar, Mrs. Meera Patankar and Ms. Yamuna Patankar have resorted to doing various acts of omission and commission which are not only malicious, but also intended to deliberately harm the name and reputation of **M/s. Pavithra Constructions Pvt. Ltd.** and its Managing Director. Our client is already in the process of initiating appropriate Civil and Criminal proceedings against Mr. Ajith Kumar, Mrs. Meera Patankar. Ms.Yamuna Patankar and such other persons as may be necessary while also taking suitable steps for recovering damages and compensation. The general public is hereby informed not to be swayed away or mislead by such false, incorrect and vexatious statements made in the Caution Notice dated 10.08.2025. **M/s. Pavithra Constructions Pvt. Ltd.,** is legally entitled to sell, alienate and deal with the developer's share in the development called as "Pavithra's Sahasra". The general public is also informed that they are free to verify the records at the office of **M/s. Pavithra Constructions Pvt. Ltd.** and take an informed decision in the matter.

ABHINAV .R, Advocate
KUMAR AND KUMAR, Advocates
F-113, 3rd Floor, Central Chambers, 2nd Main,
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Email: kumarandkumaradvocates@gmail.com

पुलिस अधीक्षक का कार्यालय, सिमडेगा।
(सर्वसाधारण के लिए सूचना)

लापता महिला सोनी फातमा उम्र–करीब 30 वर्ष, पति–ताजुद्दीन मियाँ, सा0–मतरामेटा, थाना–टी0टाँगर, जिला–सिमडेगा, राज्य– झारखण्ड, दिनांक–08.08.2025 दिन भुक्रवार को **करीब 10:00 बजे सिमडेगा जा रही हूँ बताकर निकली थी, जो** अभी तक अपने घर वापस नहीं लौटी है। गुम ुदा महिला की बरामदगी अभी तक नहीं हो पायी है, जिसकी विवरणी निम्नवत् हैः–

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Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving
Holy Spirit Prayer

Holy Spirit, Thou who make me see everything and shows me the way to reaching my ideals, You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and Who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be, I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your perpetual glory. To that end and submitting to God's holy will, I ask from You.....etc (your reqest)

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Leopard sighted near Chamundi Hill in Mysuru

MYSURU, DHNS: A video of a leopard sighted near Devikere in Chamundi Hill in Mysuru on Friday night, went viral on social media.

DCF (Wild Life) Mysuru Division, I B Prabhu Gowda said that the personnel of Leopard Task Force visited the spot on Friday and found the pug marks of the leopard and signs of its movement there.

They have created awareness among the residents of Chamundi Hill on precautionary measures.

RFO Greening Urban Range Srinivas stated that there are four leopards in Chamundi Hill.

They have received two such informations about leopards sighted by people in the hill for the first time this month in the recent past.

In this video, the leopard is seen sitting on a culvert adjacent to the road near Devikere and it is a forest region.

The entry to Chamundi Hill is restricted for the general public between 9 pm and 6 am, except residents of Chamundi Hill.

The vehicle from which the video has been captured belonged to local residents. They have taken it when they reached their home in the hill around 8.30 pm, he said.

Earlier this month, a leopard was found in the CCTV footage of a house near a lane at the edge of the forest area in Chamundi Hill.

Warder caught smuggling banned items into prison

MANGALURU, DHNS: A prison warder was caught attempting to smuggle banned items into the Mangaluru District Jail on Friday noon.

According to the officials, at around 1.40 pm, warder Santosh, attached to the district prison, was intercepted during a routine security check at the prison's main gate by KSISF personnel. During frisking, the staff noticed suspicious items concealed in his clothes.

The officials recovered a package wrapped in khaki-coloured tape. The package contained around 41 grams of suspected ganja, 11 grams of tobacco, a mobile charging cable, an OTG device, a metallic tube-shaped object, and rolling papers.

When questioned, Santosh admitted that the items were handed over to him the previous evening (August 21) by a person named Jayaprakash.

He was allegedly instructed to deliver them to an undertrial lodged in the jail.

Santosh reportedly tried to sneak the contraband inside by concealing it in his undergarments while reporting for duty.

The seized items, along with the accused warder, were handed over to the authorities for further legal action. The KSISF officials filed a detailed report of the incident and lodged a complaint with the Barke police seeking appropriate action against the warder.

CPCB directs real-time monitoring of waste-to-energy plants

Aimed at self-surveillance of air & water quality

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has directed the state pollution control board (SPCB) authorities to ensure waste-to-energy (WTE) plants and sanitary landfill (SLF) sites install the online continuous emission monitoring system (OCEMS) for self surveillance of air and water quality in such units.

The WTE plants and the SLFs are significant sources of air emissions and leachate, which affect the environment if not managed at the early stage. Governments struggling with handling solid waste have found WTE plants as a win-win to meet increasing demand while reducing the burden of the piling waste.

The CPCB had in July written to the heads of the pollution control authorities in the states and the Union territories, seeking a report on the action taken against the WTE industries that have failed to comply with the emission standards.

The CPCB's latest directive comes after its report showing that WTE plants in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat were operational without valid authorisation. The incineration stack was not monitored for all the parameters, the plant did not provide an analysis report of bottom ash/fly ash and all parameters in leachate were not monitored. The Andhra Pradesh SPCB had not provided details of action taken.

Governments struggling with handling solid waste have found waste-to-energy plants as a win-win to meet increasing power demand while reducing the burden of the piling waste. PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION.

Deadline set

The CPCB has set September 12 as the deadline for states to enforce the rules and submit an action taken report. The Board directed the states to ensure that all operational and upcoming MSW incineration-based WTE plants to install and operate OCEMS for real-time monitoring of the parameters such as particulate matter, sulphur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen oxides (NOx), hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen chloride and carbon monoxide. Similarly, the SLFs have to install online continuous effluent monitoring systems to check the quality of the treated leachage for parameters like pH, total suspended solids (TSS), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD), ammoniacal nitrogen and fluoride.

The National Green Tribunal's principal bench had directed the central authority to file a fresh compliance report, noting that if the states fail to respond to the communication then appropriate action be taken to ensure compliance.

Sources said the OCEMS was aimed at reducing the workload of the understaffed SPCBs. "It's an enforcement regime where the monitoring is done based on data generated by OCEMS. It will take time for the states to adopt and streamline it," the source said.

Bike taxis: Assn meets Rahul Gandhi, seeks his intervention

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bike Taxi Welfare Association of Karnataka met the Leader of Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Saturday, seeking his intervention for a clear policy to regulate bike taxis in the state.

While the association has about 12,000 members in Bengaluru, it represents over six lakh bike taxi drivers across the state, said association president Adi Narayan in a statement released on Saturday.

Association members briefed Rahul Gandhi on their ongoing livelihood crisis in Karnataka and sought his intervention.

A press statement issued by the association, stated, "Rahul Gandhi patiently heard the delegation and assured his support to bike taxi drivers, most of them young workers struggling to make ends meet. His assurance has ignited fresh hope for over six lakh drivers and their families, reeling under a severe livelihood crisis caused by the suspension of services."

Members of the association also submitted a letter to the Congress MP, highlighting three key demands — urging the government of Karnataka to frame policy and regulation on the operation of bike taxis in the state, that bike taxis be allowed to resume operations immediately, and no punitive action be taken against bike taxi drivers until the policy is framed. Bike taxi services on Ola, Uber and Rapido have been operational since August 21, despite not receiving prior permissions from the Karnataka High Court. The transport department is currently mulling legal action against the ride-aggregator platforms.

Sharavathi storage project: Public hearing next month

2,000-MW plant requires 133 acres of forest land

BENGALURU, DHNS

Despite clear directions to prevent the felling of over 12,000 trees in the Sharavathi Valley Lion-Tailed Macaque (LTM) Sanctuary, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) has announced that it will hold a public hearing on the controversial Pumped Storage Project (PSP) in September.

The project, proposed by the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), aims to generate 2,000 MW of electricity during peak hours by constructing a network of underground tunnels and a powerhouse between the Talakalale (upper dam) and Gerusoppa (lower dam).

To execute the project, KPCL has sought 352.77 acres of land, which includes 133.81 acres of forest and 218.95 acres of private holdings spread across the Uttara Kannada and Shivamogga districts.

According to a notice issued by the KSPCB, the public hearing in Uttara Kannada district will take place on September 18 at the Shri Gutti Kannika Parameshwari Nagaradevi Kalyana Mantapa in Uppinagoli, Gerusoppa post, Honnavar taluk. However, there is still no clarity regarding the hearing in Shivamogga, though the KSPCB website tentatively lists September 16 as the date.

Conservationists and wildlife activists have strongly opposed the project, warning that it would involve the felling of 16,041 trees and blasting of fragile hills to create tunnels and approach roads in an ecologically sensitive sanctuary established to protect the endangered Lion-Tailed Macaques. Critics have also pointed out that KPCL has not submitted full details of the potential impact of the transmission infrastructure, accusing the corporation of forcing a fait accompli situation on the regulatory authorities.

Earlier this month, the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC)—the highest statutory authority under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change—had asked the Karnataka government to explore alternatives to save as many trees as possible. Referring to recommendations made by the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL), the FAC deferred its decision and directed the state's nodal officer to provide a detailed response.

AKHILESH CHIPLI
Environmental activist

"The FAC's recommendations require major revisions in the impact assessment reports. Without incorporating these directions, pushing the project ahead is unjustifiable. This is not about energy security; it is a contractor-driven project that threatens wildlife and undermines the livelihoods of people dependent on the Western Ghats.

The NBWL had suggested converting one of the proposed roads into an underground tunnel and modifying another structure, steps that could save nearly 12,500 trees. The FAC also emphasised that the state must address issues flagged by a regional office site inspection report before pushing the project forward.

As per the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, public hearings are a mandatory step to ensure "widest possible public participation" in project-affected districts. Public feedback is considered crucial before any environmental clearance is granted.

Sagar-based environmental activist Akhilesh Chipli argued that the government was bypassing due process.

"The FAC's recommendations require major revisions in the impact assessment reports. Without incorporating these directions, pushing the project ahead is unjustifiable. This is not about energy security; it is a contractor-driven project that threatens wildlife and undermines the livelihoods of people dependent on the Western Ghats," he said.

KSPCB officials were unavailable for comment.

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विज्ञापन सं / ADVT. No.12/2025

CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL), Bengaluru desires to engage One Part-time Medical Officer for Health Centre, CSIR-NAL under CSIR-4PI for OPD treatment of its employees, pensioners and family pensioners on purely temporary basis on contract for a period of one year on payment of a monthly remuneration.

Walk-in-Interview for engagement of Part Time Medical Officer (01 position) on Tuesday, 16.09.2025 at 09:00 AM in RAB Meeting Complex, CSIR-NAL, Bengaluru

Name of the Post	Essential Qualifications & Experience	Nature of Work	Tenure	Upper Age
Part-time Medical Officer **(One Post) for CSIR-4PI to work at Health Centre, CSIR-NAL**	Qualification: MBBS degree with 55% marks from a Medical college / university recognized by Govt. / MCI plus 1-year Internship with minimum one year working experience in Govt./ Private Hospital. Basic knowledge of computer operations and local language is preferred.	To attend the Outpatients at CSIR-NAL dispensary.	One year (may be extended on need basis)	64 years as on the date of Walk in Interview
Remuneration	Selected candidate will be paid a consolidated honorarium of Rs.46020/- (Rupees Forty Six Thousand and Twenty Only) per month for performing three hours duty per day			
	Part-Time Medical Officer will work for three hours per day (except Sunday and Gazetted holidays) during the dispensary timings based on the requirements of the Laboratory & Institute.			

For complete details of advertisement, please visit CSIR-NAL **website: www.nal.res.in.**

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Scan QR Code for Scheme Guidelines

CBC 38101-11-0013-2526

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. PROJECT-SWR-Gr259-TL-DBL
Dated : 17-08-2025
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Design, Supply, Construction, Testing and Commissioning of one no. 66kV UG Cable from 220kV Dabaspete Substation to Thyamagundlu substation for an approximate Route length of 7.945 kms along with 1 No of 66kV terminal bay at Dabaspete KPTCL Substation for enhancing power supply from existing 5 MVA to 30 MVA.	Rs. 48,86,95,372.85

Last date for submission of bids:
Upto 15:00 Hrs on 12-09-2025
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date
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2. The Ministry of Ayush hereby notifies the public that-

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ii. The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, strictly prohibits the advertisement of drugs and magic remedies for the treatment of certain diseases and conditions. Any person found guilty of contravening this Act shall be liable for penalties as prescribed under the law.

iii. The Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani (ASU) medicines containing the drugs listed in Schedule E(1) of Drug Rules, 1945 are mandated to be consumed under the supervision and guidance of a registered medical practitioner of the concerned system of Ayush medicine. Container of such medicines will have instruction over its label that **"Caution - To be taken under Medical supervision"** in both Hindi and English languages. General public are advised to use such medications only after consultations with registered medical practitioners/doctors of concern Ayush systems.

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3. General public is hereby informed to be aware of the aforementioned facts in respect of ASU&H drugs/medicines and avoid patronizing of misleading advertisements of such drugs/ medicines. Public is also encouraged to report any such objectionable advertisements, false claims, fake medicines etc. to Drug Policy Section, Ministry of Ayush at **(email : ayush-medicine@gov.in)** and/or the concerned State Licensing Authority for appropriate action.

J-11019/01/2017-DCC(AYUSH)

Ministry of Ayush

CBC 17201/11/0003/2526

MIND HOW YOU MINE THEM

'It comes to naught sans tourist facilities, conservation efforts'

Infra issues pull back Unesco tag push for heritage sites

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

For over a decade now, the monuments of Srirangapatna, Aihole-Badami and Vijayapura are making futile efforts to get into the privileged Unesco world heritage sites' list.

Poor planning, encroachments and lack of administrative efforts have meant that these historically and culturally significant monuments are still not on the world tourism-map.

While experts unanimously believe that this tag will put another ring of protection around these monuments and give greater visibility for Karnataka's art and culture worldwide, they also say that unless authorities concerned take adequate measures to make these monuments tourist-friendly and meet all world standards in conservation, getting the tag makes no difference.

They give the example of Pattadakal, a Badami Chalukya dynasty era site, which received world recognition in 1987. Yet, it is struggling with lack of connectivity and poor hospitality infrastructure.

India has 44 world heritage properties, out of which Karnataka has three historical sites — the group of monuments at Hampi, Pattadakal and the sacred ensembles of Hoysalas in Belur, Halebid and Somanathapura — and Western Ghats, the natural heritage site.

This apart, the union government has listed monuments and forts of the Deccan Sultanate, monuments of Srirangapatna, evolution of temple architecture at Aihole–Badami-Pattadakal and Hire Benkal, a megalithic site near Gangavathi, in the tentative list for recognition.

The Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, (DAMH) is preparing a dossier for Lakkundi (Gadag) and Shravanabelagola (Hassan), in a bid to get international recognition for these monuments.

> The government is dedicated to providing tourist-friendly facilities at all the monuments of significance. We will implement all master plans and recommendations made by the Unesco committee in the coming days.
>
> **Rajendra K V**
> Director of Tourism

The Archaeological Survey of India, with corporate social responsibility funds from Indian Oil, is installing illumination lights at Pattadakal, which received the Unesco world heritage site tag in 1987. But the Badami Chalukya dynasty era site suffers from lack of connectivity and poor hospitality infrastructure even after getting the recognition. PHOTO BY ASI

While the Unesco recognition does not provide any monetary benefit to the monuments, it helps them get better tourist inflow and standardise conservation efforts.

There have been several instances when the Unesco monitoring committee has stepped in to prevent adverse development work in Hampi to ensure that the monuments are protected.

Srikumar M Menon, associate professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, who specialises in ancient Indian architecture, says the world heritage site list would make a difference to any monument as a majority of visitors prefer to visit Unesco-recognised sites.

"By getting recognition for these monuments, which highlight various phases of history in Karnataka, the state can boost tourism. The greater footfall also means the administration will be forced to maintain them," he says.

However, many of the enlisted monuments lack basic facilities such as roads, toilets, drinking water facility, parking area, hotels, lodges and most importantly, documentation.

Unesco requires governments to present site descriptions in a prescribed way.

The chances of Aihole, Badami and monuments at Vijayapura getting the Unesco tag are bleak as these monuments suffer from encroachments.

Ramesh Mulimani, Superintending Archaeologist at Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Dharwad, says they have been requesting the district administration to clear encroachments and enhance connectivity to these monuments. However, so far, the progress is very slow.

"Unesco requires monuments to be in their historical condition. In Vijayapura and Aihole, in spite of those monuments carrying a very significant part of our history, they are encroached upon. The government is making efforts to clear them," he says.

Hire Benkal, a prehistoric era site seems to be the frontrunner in getting the tag, as the government is making all efforts to get the recognition.

The site stands in complete negligence as there is no proper connectivity or research to establish its actual period.

"We know very little about the structures at Hire Benkal. The ASI is looking at these monuments only from the point of view of archaeological importance, whereas this site has anthropological and social importance too. There are over 200 plus cave paintings in and around this site. We need to identify them, do research on them and present them to the international committee, for recognition. However, with ASI lacking expertise on these subjects, we are unable to get the much-needed conservation tag to this site," says Gangavathi -based researcher Sharanabasappa Kholkar.

Srirangapatna has immense potential to draw visitors given its proximity to Bengaluru and Mysuru, says Rajani M B of NIAS. But she warns that the boundaries drawn for Unesco recognition can be "a double-edged sword".

While it protect structures within the core and buffer zones, it can leave outlying features exposed to redevelopment pressures from rising tourism.

'Protect the edges'

"If these boundaries don't include all remnants, the very popularity of the site can end up damaging its unprotected edges," she says.

"Karnataka is making efforts to get Unesco tag for several of our monuments. We are preparing a dossier for Hire Benekal and other sites. With Unesco making it mandatory that only one monument will be recognised from a country per year, getting recognition for all our monuments is becoming a bit difficult," said A Devaraj, the DAMH commissioner.

The labour department does not have accurate data on the number of migrant workers living in the state, as no survey was conducted. PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

85% of migrant workers in Karnataka come from 6 states: Data

Workers from North India power state's projects

BHARATH JOSHI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka is home to nearly a lakh registered workers from across India who have come here to earn a livelihood, and just six states account for 85% of this migration, according to labour department data.

The labour department does not have accurate data on the number of migrant workers living in the state, as no survey was conducted.

However, there is a count of interstate workers based on details furnished by employers and establishments under various laws. As per this, Karnataka has 78,289 workers from other states.

There are another 18,865 migrants registered with the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. Apparently, interstate workers can register with the Board, which provides various monetary benefits towards healthcare, children's education, marriage and so on.

These 97,154 migrants are from all Indian states, but most of them hail from Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Also, most of the migrant workers accounted for are in Bengaluru.

Workers migrate to Karnataka, especially Bengaluru, because of better pay and quality of life. In 2023, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge explained migration thus: "Have you ever heard any Kannadiga going to Uttar Pradesh for a job? Why do people from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh come here? Because of our ecosystem. Because the Hindi heartland thinks they can come to South India and Karnataka to earn a livelihood. Nobody from the south thinks they can go to the Hindi heartland and earn a livelihood. Because of the social infrastructure."

The number of migrant workers is far higher than the labour department's count.

"Workers in all main projects like Metro and water supply come from Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha," senior BJP lawmaker S Suresh Kumar, a former labour minister, said.

"In the hospitality segment, many workers are from the northeast. The startup Urban Company is full of people from Odisha and West Bengal," he said.

Kumar, the Rajajinagar MLA, raised a question on migrant workers during the just-concluded monsoon session of the legislature.

"I wanted to know what kind of a life they lead in Bengaluru," he said, expressing concerns over crimes committed by them.

"They don't mingle, they don't learn the [Kannada] language and succumb to addictions like gutka. I intend to know how we should take care of them," he said.

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act requires contractors, who bring in workers from other states, to register with the government and provide equal pay, defined work hours and other facilities.

The Act asks employers to provide interstate workers with housing and other benefits.

Migrants

78,289 Migrants as per employers' statutory disclosures

18,865 Migrants registered with Construction Workers Board

97,154 Total

TOP MIGRANT ARRIVALS

22,374 Bihar	**11,734** Jharkhand
13,973 Assam	**11,179** West Bengal
13,140 Odisha	**10,155** UP

RELAXING WALK

Dasara elephants get a bath on the palace premises in Mysuru on Saturday.
DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGH T

Farmer killed in crocodile attack

▶ **MUDDEBIHAL (VIJAYAPURA DISTRICT), DHNS:** A farmer who had taken oxen to River Krishna for a wash died after he was attacked by a crocodile in Kunchaganoor village of Muddebihal taluk in Vijayapura district on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Kaashappa Hanamantha Kambali (38). On learning of the incident, the authorities mounted a search operation, which lasted five hours before Kambali's body was finally found.

K'taka set to get more medical seats this year

To be added to seat pool of ongoing counselling

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka is likely to get more MBBS seats for the ongoing medical seat counselling pool with the National Medical Commission (NMC) allowing addition of fresh seats.

Following the communication by the NMC, the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) has issued a communication about revised schedule for second round of counselling.

"In order to include newly authorised MBBS seats in Round 2 of UG Counselling 2025, the competent authority has decided to start Round 2 of the UG counselling 2025 from August 29, tentatively. However, the revised schedule for the Round 2 will be published shortly," reads the communication from the MCC.

According to officials from the Department of Medical Education, this year NMC did not consider enhancement of seats for any college. "We had sought enhancement of seats for most government-run institutions including Bengaluru Medical College and Research Institute. But, none got clearance from NMC for additional seats. However, as NMC has announced that the process of increasing MBBS seats is under progress, we are confident of getting at least 50% of what we sought for," said a senior official of the department.

As per the details available from the seat matrix released earlier, 9,263 MBBS seats were available in the state for the current academic year. The department had submitted a request seeking enhancement of 800 seats at the government-run institutions.

"For most of the colleges we had sought 50 additional seats while for two institutions 100 seats were sought depending on facilities available there. Even if the NMC considers 50% of our demand, we will be getting at least 400 more seats for the second round which will be available for poor meritorious students," added the official.

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has resumed option entry for the second round of seat allotment for medical courses, but with the communication from MCC the authorities said they will wait for the revised schedule.

"If we get additional seats, we will add them to the pool and update the matrix. As we have just opened the option entry for students, it will not affect the process or the aspirants," clarified H Prasanna Executive Director KEA.

It can be recalled that NMC had pointed to various infrastructure deficiencies during its visit to colleges in Karnataka and denied permission for enhancement of seats. However, by providing undertaking the state government tried to convince the NMC, which did not work. Even new colleges proposed at Ramanagara and Kanakapura were rejected by the NMC.

Nomadic SCs meet CM, to continue protest for 1% quota

BENGALURU, DHNS: Representatives of nomadic Scheduled Castes (SC), who are demanding a separate 1% internal reservation for 59 "most backward" communities, decided to go ahead with their agitation after talks with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah failed on Saturday.

The Federation of Scheduled Caste Nomadic Communities has opposed the state government's decision on internal reservation for SCs as 59 "most backward" communities have been clubbed with the 'touchable' Dalit communities.

The government has decided to reduce the five categories (A, B, C, D and E) proposed by the Justice Nagamohan Das Commission on internal reservation to three - A, B and C.

In group C, the government has clubbed the "most backward" communities with Lambani (Banjara), Bhovi, Korma and Koracha communities ('touchable' Dalits). Since the 'touchable' Dalits are found to be the most forward of all Dalit sub-groups, several activists have opposed clubbing these 59 communities.

FAR BEHIND TARGET

New industrial projects in state created 1.5 lakh jobs in five years

RASHMI BELUR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Nearly 1.5 lakh people have secured jobs as a result of the implementation of as many as 183 industrial projects across the state since 2020. However, this is significantly short of the 8.76 lakh jobs that the state had hoped to create in the same timespan across various districts of the state.

Besides failing to meet its intended target vis-à-vis job creation, Karnataka's plans to attract investments in districts other than Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts has not borne fruit. Of the 1,49,739 people who secured employment over the past five years, 74,193 got jobs in 32 new industrial projects, which yielded a total investment of Rs 30,274 crore, in Bengaluru Rural district. Dharwad slotted in a distant second, with 22,259 new jobs being created there, while Kolar came in third with 12,811 getting jobs in new projects in the district. Cumulatively, the 183 industrial projects attracted investments totalling Rs 92,175 crore.

Data sourced from the Department of Large and Medium Industries shows 2,668 projects with the promise of drawing investment to the Rs 5.5 lakh crore received government nod through the single-window clearance system over the past five years. Data shows that work is under way on 2,434 of these projects, which once completed, could generate employment for 7,18,511 people across Karnataka. Furthermore, despite a large number of these projects being based out of Bengaluru Rural – 644 – Tumakuru, Chikkaballapur, Mysuru and Dharwad districts will house more than 100 of these new projects.

A senior official in the department said that most industries were coming up at Nelamangala, Doddabalappura, Hoskote and Devanahalli. "However, we are trying to divert investments to other districts. For instance, 13 new industries have commenced operations in Dharwad, with work under way on 154 others," the official added.

Of the 2,668 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that the state signed with various industries since 2020, 51 have been dropped. These 51 projects had the potential to create nearly 8,000 jobs, besides drawing investment of nearly Rs 9,455 crore.

Minister for Large and Medium Industries M B Patil pointed to the many incentives that the state was offering to attract investment in districts beyond Bengaluru. "We have also sought permission to upgrade the airports in Hubballi and Belagavi into international terminals, which we think will help attract investment in the region," said the minister, adding that the government was restructuring Investment Karnataka Forum (IKF) with industry leaders being roped in to offer their rich insights.

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Contact :-
9980212013
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PERSONAL

Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Meena Anand Dodamani** W/o Ramesh Varadha Rajan A, resident of 182/S, 3rd B Cross Road, 2nd Main Road, Domlur Layout, Bengaluru- 560071, have changed my name to **MEENA ANAND DODMANI** vide affidavit dated 23-08-2025 before notary C.V.Earappa, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called as **Meena Anand Dodmani** only.

ED arrests Congress MLA in illegal betting case

ED, From Page 3

"Further, the suspect's brother, KC Thippeswamy, is operating three business entities from Dubai, viz, Diamond Softech, TRS Technologies, and Prime9Technologies, related to the call centre services and gaming business of KC Veerendra Puppy."

Apart from the currency, ED investigators also recovered gold jewellery worth Rs six crore and silver articles weighing approximately 10 kg. Four vehicles, including a Mercedes car, were impounded under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. Three of the cars had the same number on their registration plates: 0003

"Further, 17 bank accounts and two bank lockers were frozen," said the ED, adding that "documents related to multiple properties were also seized from the premises of the brother, KC Nagaraj and his son, Pruthvi N Raj". "His other associates, namely brother KC Thippeswamy, and Pruthvi N Raj, are handling operations of online gaming from Dubai. Further, it was revealed that KC Veerendra, along with his associates, had travelled to Gangtok via Bagdogra on a business visit to lease land for a casino," the ED said.

The agency claimed that searches indicated a complex layering of cash and other funds.

India plans to put 119 satellites in space in 15 years

Satellite, From Page 3

A Venus orbiter mission is also planned to be launched by March 2028.

"We have reached the moon and Mars. Now, we have to peek into deep space, where several secrets that would benefit the future of humanity lie hidden," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here at the National Space Day event.

Addressing scientists, students, industry representatives and policymakers, Modi said, "Beyond galaxies lies our horizons. The endless universe tells us that no frontier is the final frontier. At the policy level, there should be no final frontier in the space sector." Because of its aspirations, Isro plans to add 11 more ground stations to its existing network of 10.

Two of the new ground stations would be at Maitri, the Indian station at Antarctica while others will come up at USA, Chile, the Arctic and Mauritius, as well as in Jodhpur and Guwahati.

With space-based broadband internet services becoming a popular area dominated by global players like SpaceX and OneWeb, India mulls to have its own LEO constellation with more than 140 satellites to cater to the broadband needs of big urban centres. The space agency has showcased a life-sized model of the first module of Bharatiya Antriksh Station. The 10-tonne module is slated to be launched by 2028 and the entire Indian space station is scheduled to be in place by 2035.

At present, there are only two orbital laboratories: the International Space Station operated by five space agencies, and China's Taingong space station.

More than 2.3L ECGs in four months...

CG, From Page 3

Many people repeatedly visit doctors and take appointments just to seek advice on how to avoid heart-related issues. "People now seek heart care for early warning signs (like irregular heartbeat or swelling), young-age attacks, Covid or vaccine-related worries, and family history. Most want to know how to prevent issues, even if genetics plays a role," said Dr Sreekanth Shetty, director and HoD-cardiology at a private hospital in Marathahalli.

Dharmasthala: BJP demands NIA probe to unravel 'conspiracy'

Ashoka dares CM to act against 'mosques facing complaints'

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Vijayendra

R Ashoka

The BJP, loaded with fresh ammunition to attack the Congress government after the arrest of the witness-complainant in the Dharmasthala case, demanded a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to expose "conspirators" and "foreign hands".

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka even dared Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to act against mosques facing complaints.

"It will be good if the state hands over the case to NIA before the Centre orders it. If the state government doesn't give it to NIA, Congress' role in this will be clear," Ashoka said and asked Congress to apologise.

"Progressive people who're always with Siddaramaiah... Have they acted on complaints against mosques? Have they dug up land near any mosque? Petitions have been filed in courts claiming rape," Ashoka said.

A former home minister, Ashoka said the government "should have used common sense" by looking into the background of the complainant before forming a special investigation team (SIT). "Things would have ended there. Instead, crores of taxpayers' money got spent," he said.

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra also demanded "appropriate investigation" into the "conspiracy" against Dharmasthala.

"We had said that a conspiracy was being hatched against the temple town, and it has come true now," the state BJP chief said.

"Just as the Congress government formed an SIT under pressure from the Leftists, an appropriate investigation should now be done against those who conspired against Dharmasthala".

BJP workers stage a protest condemning false propaganda against Dharmasthala, in Haveri on Saturday. DH PHOTO

It's raining rallies

Jayanagar BJP MLA C K Ramamurthy said 2,000 persons would leave for Dharmasthala in 400 vehicles from his constituency and BTM Layout on Monday morning.

A half-km foot march has been planned at the temple town, he added. On Saturday, Bommanahalli BJP MLA Satish Reddy left for Dharmasthala along with his supporters in 200 vehicles, from his constituency. Nelamangala Congress MLA N Srinivasaiah is also going to Dharmasthala to express solidarity with the temple town.

Court grants conditional bail to Mahesh Thimarodi

UDUPI, DHNS: The Additional Civil Judge and JMFC Court on Saturday granted a conditional bail to Rashtriya Hindu Jagaran Vedike president Mahesh Shetty Timarodi in the case related to his alleged derogatory remarks against BJP national general secretary B L Santosh.

The prosecution filed its objections to Timarodi's bail plea contending that the statements made by the accused were inflammatory and could potentially affect public peace.

But defense counsel Vijay Vasu Poojary countered the charges and submitted that Timarodi, a known Hindu community leader, had not spoken against any other religion. He clarified that the comments were strictly about Hinduism and did not target any particular religious group.

The court sought to know why police custody was not sought on the day of arrest. "Why it wasn't requested earlier and why the PSI arrived late for the morning session," court sought to know.

Expressing displeasure over these lapses, the court granted a total of four hours of police custody and directed the police to produce Timarodi again by 4:40 PM.

After hearing arguments from all sides, court granted conditional bail to Timarodi. The court directed him not to make any statements or act in any manner that could disturb social harmony or public peace.

Police security provided for complainant Sujatha Bhat

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Even as the Special Investigation Team arrested the complainant-witness in the alleged Dharmasthala mass burial case, police personnel were deployed for security of Sujatha Bhat, the woman at the centre of the case on Saturday.

A total of 15 cops have been deployed for the safety of Sujatha who lives in an old rented flat Padmanabhanagar, Banashankari third stage.

A police officer present at the scene told *DH*, "We are here for security purposes until the Special Investigation Team (SIT) arrives." He further stated that when many media reporters gathered to speak with her, she allegedly said, 'It's enough for me, I won't talk to anyone,' and threatened to commit suicide.

The last few days have been a stream of contradictory claims from Sujatha, who had for weeks captivated the state with her harrowing tale of a "missing daughter, Ananya Bhat." Now, in her recent confession to a Kannada news channel, she claimed that the entire story was a fabrication and she had no daughter. She further stated it's her friend's daughter.

The quiet, middle-class neighbourhood is now under a media scanner. When approached for a comment, residents were guarded, many of them hesitant to speak on the record.

Police personnel deployed at the residence of Sujatha Bhat at Padmanabhanagar in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

"She was a very private person," one elderly neighbour, who lives in the area for over two decades, said. "We would see her occasionally, but she kept to herself. This entire thing is shocking."

The officer added that none of her neighbours seemed to know her personally, she was living in isolation and they mentioned that one of her neighbours saw her selling Kashayas (medicinal beverages) near a park.

Bidar youth arrested for Rs 9.25 cr GST evasion using fake bills

KALABURAGI, DHNS: The Commercial Taxes (Enforcement) officers of the Kalaburagi East Zone have unearthed a Goods and Services Tax (GST) fraud amounting to Rs 9.25 crore orchestrated by a Hyderabad-based Bidar youth.

The sleuths have arrested the suspect, Rahul Kulkarni, from Hyderabad.

Joint Commissioner of Commercial Taxes Yasmin Walikar told reporters here that Rahul had registered for GST in October 2020 and this was cancelled due to suspicious transactions. Later, he continued transactions in the name of his mother Manjula, brother Venkatesh and friend Preetam by obtaining their Aadhaar cards and registering for GST.

Rahul has admitted that he had issued fake bills after the officials conducted an investigation on the bills submitted by the contractors.

They have recovered Rs 4 crore tax along with the fine.

"Rahul was getting 3 to 4% commission from contractors by issuing fake bills. He used to help contractors to get fake investment tax claims by issuing fake bills without providing any goods or services. A team comprising Bidar Assistant Commissioner of Commercial Taxes (Enforcement) Parvatha Gowda, Commercial Taxes officer Ashok Shembelli and other officials from Kalaburagi, arrested the accused who was hiding in Hyderabad," Walikar explained.

The joint commissioner said summons were issued to Rahul's mother, brother and a friend, and they will also be arrested soon.

We are for justice, says Shivakumar

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday said the government had maintained that action would be taken against those who are wrong in terms of allegations in the Dharmasthala case.

Shivakumar was reacting to the arrest of the witness-complainant in the case.

"The BJP hadn't spoken anything. They're fence-sitters. They started speaking after I spoke (calling it a conspiracy) on the issue," Shivakumar said.

On August 14, Shivakumar had brushed aside allegations of mass burials at Dharmasthala, dubbing it a dud case and that a "big conspiracy" was hatched to defame the temple town.

"Investigation is on. Our government, Home Minister (G Parameshwara) and CM, had told the Congress legislature party meeting and in the Assembly that action will be taken against those who have done wrong," he told reporters here.

"We are not in favour of anyone. We are in favour of justice. We don't want politics in dharma," Shivakumar said.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, incharge of Dakshina Kannada district, said SIT was looking into all aspects.

"The case was projected as if something sinister had taken place. But when nothing came out, the SIT will find out why charges were levelled," Rao said, adding that there is no political pressure on SIT. "The SIT is acting as per law, so there's no question of judging whether what they've done is right or wrong".

Consider compassionate job for dead KSRTC staffer's brother: HC

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Dharwad bench of the Karnataka High Court has directed the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) to consider the application filed by the brother of a deceased employee seeking appointment on compassionate grounds.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj said that the mere marriage of the deceased employee, whose wife predeceased him and the couple was issueless, cannot be a ground to reject the application of his brother.

The petitioners are Sanganna Lolasar and his mother Mantavva, residents of Muddebihal in Vijayapura district.

Sanganna's brother Veeresh Lolasar, who was working as a driver with the KSRTC in Ballari, had died in harness on September 21, 2023. Sanganna's application seeking appointment on compassionate grounds was rejected on November 4, 2024, on the grounds that Veeresh Mantappa Lolasar was married and hence, no employment on a compassionate basis could be provided to the brother.

It was contended that Veeresh's wife Sunanda died on April 9, 2022, much before the former's death. The couple had no children, and Veeresh was taking care of his mother and brother.

The KSRTC argued that, as per the policy, if the deceased were married, compassionate employment cannot be provided for anyone other than the wife and children.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj noted that the ambit and purport of appointment on a compassionate basis is to ensure that the family of the deceased employee is taken care of and the exigencies due to the death ought not to result in a financial burden to the family.

The court also noted that the transport corporation, while not denying compassionate appointment, only argued that the brother of the employee could not be granted since the deceased employee was married.

"However, the fact remains that the spouse of the deceased employee had predeceased him on 9.4.2022, and they do not have any children who could seek a compassionate appointment. After the death of the spouse, the deceased employee was taking care of both his mother and brother. In that view of the matter, I am of the opinion that Petitioner No 2, having undertaken to take care of Petitioner No 1, the mother, the application of Petitioner No 2 for appointment on a compassionate basis ought to have been considered by the Respondent in a proper perspective," Justice Suraj Govindaraj said.

The court has directed the KSRTC to consider Sanganna's application for appointment on compassionate grounds to a suitable post as per his qualifications within a period of 12 weeks.

'Adivasi rights under siege': Activists demand end to Operation Kagar

'A smokescreen to seize mineral-rich lands from rightful inhabitants'

BENGALURU, DHNS

A public discussion on Operation Kagar's impact on Adivasis was held in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Organised by Karnataka Peoples Forum Against War on Adivasis, the event brought together prominent speakers, including Prof G Hargopal and activist from Bastar Soni Sori, to address the militarisation, corporatisation, and peace processes affecting Adivasi communities.

Sori, a survivor of state violence herself, called Operation Kagar a "genocide" against Adivasis, not a war on Maoists.

She highlighted how this new offensive is merely a continuation of previous assaults like Operation Greenhunt and Salwa Judum.

She detailed the brutal realities faced by tribal people, from mass burials of the deceased without informing their families to the specific horrors of rape and fake encounters endured by Adivasi women.

She framed the core issue as a blatant land grab, arguing that the so-called "war" is a smokescreen to seize mineral-rich lands from their rightful inhabitants.

Prof Hargopal linked the violence in Chhattisgarh to a broader trend of diminishing democratic space in the country.

He highlighted the historical context of Adivasi resistance, noting their parallel struggle for autonomy during the freedom movement.

The state, he argued, is recklessly using its monopoly on force, blurring the line between state and private violence

He pointed out that while the Constitution provides protections for Adivasi lands under Schedule 5, the state's assertion of domain and its unholy nexus with corporate forces violate these rights.

The speakers condemned Operation Kagar, a campaign they believe is designed to facilitate resource loot and suppress Adivasi resistance. They demanded an end to the violence and called for support from all sections of society to protect Adivasi rights and the environment.

HM to seek addl details from SIT

UDUPI, DHNS: Home Minister G Parameshwara has said that he would seek additional details from the SIT on Dharmasthala case.

Speaking to reporters in Udupi, the minister said, "We will find out the network behind him (complainant-witness). However, I cannot say when the SIT investigation will conclude," he stated.

Since the investigation is under progress, more details cannot be disclosed. We cannot disclose more about the case until the SIT submits a final report, he added.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Rainfall occurred at many places over Coastal Karnataka and at one or two places over Interior Karnataka.
Forecast Aug 24: Partly cloudy sky. Light rain/thundershowers likely.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	27.4	19.8	0.8
Bidar	30.0	20.0	0.0
Vijayapura	29.0	21.6	0.0
Dharwad	27.6	19.6	tr
Haveri	27.4	20.8	0.0
Kalaburagi	31.6	21.4	0.0
Raichur	30.8	21.4	0.0
COASTAL			
Honnavar	29.3	23.6	6.6
Karwar	29.8	25.6	0.8
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	29.8	23.9	0.0

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	NA	NA	4.5
Bengaluru	29.2	21.0	tr
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	31.2	21.9	4.5
Chikkamagaluru	--	--	--
Chitradurga	27.5	20.5	0.0
Davangere	27.5	20.0	0.0
Hassan	28.3	19.4	0.0
Mysuru	31.2	20.0	0.0
Madikeri	--	--	--
Kolar	30.1	19.8	0.0
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	30.0	26.0	NIL
Kolkata	30.0	26.0	NIL
Mumbai	29.0	26.0	NA
Chennai	34.0	28.0	NA
Pune	26.0	22.0	NA
Hyderabad	29.0	22.0	NA
Th'puram	31.0	24.0	NIL

PUBLIC NOTICE

No.EDN.46/2025/31 **Dated Shillong, 20th August, 2025**

In continuation of the Public Notice dated 26th March, 2025, regarding matters concerning CMJ University. Meghalaya, this notice provides an important update.

Whereas, the Government of Meghalaya, through the Education Department has issued an Order dated. Shillong, the **31st March, 2014,** for the dissolution of the **CMJ University,** by invoking the powers specified under Section 48 of the CMJ University Act.

Whereas, the Supreme Court, through its judgment dated **13th February, 2025,** has passed a ruling in favor of the State Government of Meghalaya and has upheld its order for the winding up of CMJ University.

Whereas, by a notification dated 20th February 2025, the Government of Meghalaya, through the Education Department (Orders by the Governor), has appointed Shri D. Lyngdoh, Joint Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Education Department, as the Administrator of CMJ University, Meghalaya, and

Whereas, the Administrator has issued a public notice, dated 26/03/2025, for the winding up of CMJ University, thereby commencing the formal process of its dissolution and inviting claims and objections from all concerned stakeholders.

Following the first Public Notice dated 26th March, 2025, a total of 987 queries concerning CMJ University were received, which have been duly responded to and forwarded to the university's Registrar in compliance with the Order Dated April 24, 2025. These queries fell under the categories of Academic Document Requests (including degree verification, certificate procurement, and document submission), PhD-Related Queries (such as thesis evaluation and requests for degree certificates), and Grievances & General Inquiries (covering claims on degree validity and student status inquiries).

Now the administrator of CMJ University informs the public that the last date for receiving queries, grievances, and claims related to **CMJ University is 5th September, 2025.** This decision was made during a meeting held on **28th July, 2025,** in the presence of concerned individuals from the Government and the members of CMJ University Administration, to ensure all outstanding matters can be settled before the final dissolution of the university.

Key information for the public to note:

- All academic activities at CMJ University have been stopped since 15th February, 2025.
- In compliance with the Supreme Court's order 2014, no verification, authentication, or validation of degrees will be carried out. Any degrees issued in/after 2014 shall stand invalid, as the University could not have had any students continuing in view of the stay order of Supreme Court.
- The legal status of the university, which is currently dissolved, will be displayed on the university campus and its website for public information. The university premises will be sealed by the Administrator, with only administrative rooms allowed to function temporarily for the purpose of winding up of the University.

All individuals with pending queries or grievances are urged to submit them to the Administrator, CMJ University before the specified closing date to ensure their claims are addressed

Submission details: queries should be submitted to the following address:

a) Shri. D. Lyngdoh. Administrator of CMJ University, Joint Secretary to the Govt. Meghalaya, Education Department.

b) cmju.ad.authority@gmail.com (Room No, 222 Education Department, Additional Secretariat Building, Shillong)

c) (Contact No: 0364-22 12268)

Disclaimer:

This public notice is issued in continuation of the public notice dated 26/03/2025 regarding matters concerning CMJ University, Meghalaya.

Sd/- (Shri D. Lyngdoh)
(Administrator of CMJ University, Meghalaya)
(Contact No. 0364-221 226)

MIPR No. 1427
Dt. 21.08.2025

'Not Ayodhya': Tamil Nadu village's rebuttal to communal politics

Villagers say no force can break the bond between two communities

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
MADURAI (TN), DHNS

"Thiruparankundram will be the next Ayodhya," declared H Raja, a senior Tamil Nadu BJP leader, in February 2025. He made the statement as tensions flared in Thiruparankundram, the first of the six abodes of Lord Murugan, over demands to rename the hillock, which is also home to a dargah, as Sikkandar Malai.

The swift intervention of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court helped cool tempers. Four months later, in June, Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited this ancient temple city. He accused the DMK government of supporting the renaming of the hillock and encouraged Hindu devotees to participate in the June 22 Murugan conference, which advocated for Hindu consolidation in favour of the BJP.

Thiruparankundram has been a haven of religious coexistence and communal harmony for centuries. DH PHOTO

The statements by Raja and Shah, though months apart, are part of the BJP's ongoing efforts to invoke Lord Murugan — one of the most revered deities, especially among backward communities and across caste lines — as a symbolic figure in a state where the party has yet to gain a significant foothold.

Despite the attempt by both sides — the BJP alleges that the issue blew up after Ramanathapuram Lok Sabha MP Nawaz Kani led a group to consume meat at the hills — the villagers continue to live in harmony and say no force can break the bond between the two communities, who have lived as "relatives".

Both Hindus and Muslims point to "outsiders" from both communities as attempting to create tensions for political gain.

Thiruparankundram hill has been a haven of religious coexistence and communal harmony for centuries, hosting the Subramaniya Swamy temple, Kasi Viswanathan temple and Sikkander Badusha dargah.

While the dargah is the most recent religious structure, dating to the 17th century, there has never been a major religious conflict in the village.

Edakanathan, 65, who runs a stall overlooking the Murugan Temple, told *DH* that he moved to the village at age 12 and has never witnessed a conflict over religious identity.

"To this day, Muslim brethren buy sandalwood powder from me before climbing the hillock to visit the dargah. Whatever happened earlier this year is just politics — it has nothing to do with us," he said.

Senthil (39), who works at a hotel, recalls being taken to the dargah by his Muslim friends when he was sick, hoping for a cure.

"We have no differences, but it is true that outsiders are trying to create trouble. Thiruparankundram will never become another Ayodhya," he said.

India negotiating FTAs with EU, US, Chile & Peru: Goyal

NEW DELHI, PTI: India is negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs) with several countries, including the European Union, the US, Chile, and Peru, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

He said the world is looking at India, and several developed economies are negotiating FTAs with us.

The commerce ministry is engaged in these negotiations day in and day out, Goyal said.

India and the US have been negotiating a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) since March. So far, five rounds of talks have been completed. The US has deferred its visit for the sixth round of talks in India. It assumes significance as the US has imposed a hefty 50% tariff on Indian goods, starting from August 27.

At present, a 25% duty is in place.

Wangchuk slams Ladakh admin over HIAL land cancellation

LEH, PTI: The Ladakh administration has cancelled land allotment to Himalayan Institute of Alternative Learning (HIAL) here, drawing a strong reaction from its founder and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who termed it as a "witch-hunt" to suppress the demand of the people for statehood and extension of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to the Union Territory.

Leh Apex Body (LAB), which along with Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) is spearheading an agitation in support of the demand over the past four years, also criticised the decision.

Leh Deputy Commissioner Romil Singh Donk in his order on August 21 said the land measuring 1,076 kanal and 1 marla (over 53.8 hectares) allotted to HIAL "stands escheated to the State, i.e., LAHDC (Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council) and the Tehsildar, Leh, shall remove all the encumbrances from the said piece of state land as per provisions of the law and effect entries in the revenue record accordingly".

The order said the land in Phyang was given to HIAL on lease for 40 years, and it has not been used for the purpose allotted "as no University (as recognised by law) has been set up" to date.

Reacting to the cancellation of the land allotment, Wangchuk, along with the chief executive officer of HIAL, questioned the "motivated" decision and said, "it is a deliberate attempt to harass us on baseless charges" and they will move to the court for justice.

FAT school seizure deepens J&K power struggle

Govt clashes with L-G over control; fear grows for students

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

TAKE OVER

- The J&K government on Saturday took over the management of the 215 schools linked with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami.
- The order was issued by the Secretary, Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, an IAS officer who reports to the Lieutenant Governor.

The takeover of 215 schools run by the Falah-e-Aam Trust (FAT), widely believed to be an affiliate of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), has snowballed into a fresh flashpoint between the Lieutenant Governor-led administration and the Omar Abdullah-led elected government, raising fear among parents about the academic future of their children.

The School Education Department order issued by Commissioner Secretary Ram Niwas Sharma directed deputy commissioners to take over charge of these schools and constitute new management committees. The order said that FAT's committees had either expired or were red-flagged by intelligence agencies after Jamaat was banned in 2019.

"Now, therefore, in view of the above and in order to safeguard the academic future of the students enrolled in these schools in exercise of the powers conferred by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir... it is hereby ordered that: The Managing Committee of the 215 schools... shall be taken over by the District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner concerned, who shall propose a fresh Managing Committee in due course for the concerned schools after getting these duly verified," the order says.

But almost immediately, Education Minister Sakina Itoo cried foul, alleging the order had been "modified without her knowledge." She admitted that police reports had raised concerns about FAT schools, but said her decision was to place the institutions under the supervision of nearby government school principals—not under the control of district magistrates.

"The case file was with me. The order that went out was not what I had cleared," she said.

This sharp divergence has turned the takeover into a political blame game. While the L-G administration defends the move as part of a wider effort to "de-radicalise education" and cut off Jamaat's proxies, NC leaders argue that the current dispensation is unfairly dragging their government into controversy.

Opposition parties have seized the moment to attack Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, accusing the NC of either complicity or incompetence. The Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone called the move "a blatant display of political overreach," while PDP's Aijaz Ahmad Mir said it exposed "the NC government's internal lapses."

For the L-G administration, the issue is framed as one of national security. "The aim is to protect the academic future of students and ensure no banned outfit continues to run institutions through fronts," said a senior official.

Caught in between are over 51,000 students and their parents. FAT schools have for decades offered affordable education to children from low-income families and produced a stream of professionals. Parents now fear stigma and disruption. "These schools are being painted as radicalised spaces, but for us, they were simply schools. Don't make children victims of politics," said Farooq Ahmad, a parent in Baramulla.

A vendor selling flowers and oil lamps for religious offerings waits for customers as he sits under the shade of a canopy on the flooded Dashashwamedh Ghat after heavy monsoon rains induced a rise in the water level of the Ganges River in Varanasi on Saturday. AFP

Fresh cloudburst hits Chamoli; 1 dead, 2 missing

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

5 killed, 1 missing in J'khand

Five people were killed, one person was missing, and several others were injured as heavy rains wreaked havoc in parts of Jharkhand, officials said on Saturday morning.

The IMD issued a red alert of extremely heavy rainfall for Palamu, Garhwa and Chatra districts till 8.30 am on Sunday.

Close on the heels of a flash flood at Dharali village in Uttarakhand, in which seven people were killed, while several others, including Army jawans, went missing, another village in the hill state was hit by a cloudburst late on Friday night, in which one person was killed and two others went missing.

According to the officials, the cloudburst occurred at Chamoli district's Tharali tehsil after which a huge quantity of debris swept through the village, burying houses, vehicles and shops, leaving a trail of destruction. District Magistrate Sandeep Tewari said that the cloudburst had caused huge damage in the area.

A woman was also killed in the incident. Reports said that Tharali market, Kotdeep, and some other areas had suffered extensive damage and residential areas and shops were buried in the debris. Eleven people were injured and were being provided medical assistance.

Officials said that rescue operations were underway on a war footing, and NDRF and ITBP Jawans were trying to clear the debris to transport the people to safer places. There were reports of some people being trapped at Sagwara village.

According to the Chamoli District Disaster Management Centre, the Karnaprayag-Gwaldam National Highway connecting Tharali has been closed. Additionally, the Tharali-Sagwara Motorway and the Dungri Motorway have also been blocked.

Schools were closed in several areas following heavy rains, officials said, adding that efforts were on to open the roads.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami reviewed the situation at Tharali and directed all possible help to the affected people.

Manipur HC orders fresh certificates to transgender doc

GUWAHATI, DHNS: A young transgender doctor in Manipur, who struggled to have her name and gender changed in her educational certificates in order to apply for postgraduate studies, has finally received relief after the Manipur High Court directed the state education department to issue her certificates with her new name and gender (female).

The 32-year-old, Boboi Laishram, who was born male, underwent sex reassignment surgery in 2019.

She obtained a medical certificate confirming her gender change and also updated her Aadhaar, voter ID and PAN card. However, she continued to face difficulties in having her certificates corrected.

Laishram moved the Manipur High Court in 2024 seeking directions to the education department, Board of Secondary Education Manipur, Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur, Manipur University and Manipur Medical Council to issue the new certificates.

Justice Oinam Thoiba Meitei on Monday directed the BOSEM, COHSEM, Manipur University and MMC to issue her fresh certificates within one month.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY
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S. No.	Courses	Duration	Total Seats	Fees (Rs.)
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Website: http://www.nift.ac.in/bengaluru/continuing-education
Address: CEP Unit, NIFT Campus, C.A. Site. No. 21, 27th Main Raod, Sector-1, HSR Layout, Bengaluru-560102
For more details please check the NIFT Bengaluru website.

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#49, "Parisara Bhavan", 1st to 5th Floor, Church Street, Bengaluru-560001, Karnataka, INDIA,
Phone: 25581383, 25589112, 25586520, Fax: 080-25586321
E-mail: ho@kspcb.gov.in, Website: https://kspcb.karnataka.gov.in

No.PCB/169/BLD/2023/2025-26/2033 Dated: 16/08/2025

Invitation For Tender

(Through GOK e-procurement platform http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) invites tenders from eligible tenderers through GOK e-procurement platform **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** by The Member Secretary for the following work:

Name of the work: Construction of KSPCB Regional Office building at Gadag. **Approx Value of the work: Rs.289.40 Lakhs.** All payments such as tender cost, EMD etc., shall be made in e-payment mode only.

Tender Schedule/Dates : NIT Published Date, Date & Time for Pre-Bid Meeting, Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tenders, Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid : As per e-procurement portal.

For more details, please refer e-procurement web site: **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Member Secretary

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DIPR/CP/2443/SSC/2025-26

14k new polling booths likely in Bengal; all-party meet on Aug 29

KOLKATA, PTI: West Bengal is likely to get nearly 14,000 additional polling booths ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, with the Election Commission calling an all-party meeting on August 29 to discuss the proposed reorganisation of polling stations, officials said on Saturday.

The state currently has a little over 78,000 booths, spread across 294 Assembly constituencies.

According to officials in the office of the state's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), polling stations with more than 1,200 electors will be bifurcated to ease voting.

"Booths with over 1,200 voters have already been identified. These will be split to ensure smooth polling. It is likely that the number of booths will go up by 14,000. We will be discussing the rationalisation of booths with the political parties during the all-party meet," an official of the CEO office said.

With the addition of around 14,000 new ones, the total number is expected to touch 92,000.

The all-party meeting on August 29, will seek political parties' feedback on the revised allocation. Political circles feel the expansion will pose organisational challenges, particularly for opposition parties, which may find it difficult to deploy booth-level agents across the increased number of stations.

Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil to head Cabinet panel on Maratha issues

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil

Days before Manoj Jarange-Patil renews his agitation in Mumbai, the BJP-led Maha Yuti dispensation appointed veteran politician and Water Resources Minister (Godavari & Krishna Valleys) Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil as the chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Maratha issues.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis okayed the appointment.

State Higher and Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil, who earlier headed the panel, has been retained as a member.

Besides Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil and Chandrakant Patil, the 12-member committee comprises of ministers Girish Mahajan, Dada Bhuse, Uday Samant, Shambhuraj Desai, Ashish Shelar, Shivendraraje Bhosale, Manikrao Kokate, Makrand Jadhav Patil, and Babasaheb Patil, as well as the General Administration Department (GAD) secretary.

Patil, earlier an MLC and now an MLA from Pune, was chosen to head the committee during the Maha Yuti government headed by Eknath Shinde, and before that was the chairman from 2014 to 2019, when Fadnavis headed the BJP and the undivided Shiv Sena's government.

Vikhe-Patil is an eight-time MLA from Shirdi in the Ahilyanagar district, earlier known as Ahmednagar. Hailing from a family known for its role in the cooperative sector, Vikhe-Patil had been part of the Shiv Sena and the Congress before joining the BJP.

Jarange-Patil issued the clarion call of "Chalo Mumbai"—urging members of the Maratha community to mobilise in large numbers — in support of their long-standing demands of Maratha quota under the OBC category and plans to launch a hunger strike from August 29 at the Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

However, he has been urged not to launch the agitation now as it coincides with Ganeshotsav.

The Cabinet committee has been entrusted with supervising the state initiatives for the Maratha community.

Teen killed 10-yr-old girl for cricket bat, say Telangana cops

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Cyberabad police on Saturday said the 14-year-old boy taken into custody on Friday had killed his 10-year-old neighbour in Kukatpally while attempting to steal a cricket bat.

According to the police, the Class 10 student had planned to steal a cricket bat belonging to the victim's younger brother. On the morning of August 18, he entered the victim's house through the terrace and successfully took the bat. "However, as he was leaving, the girl spotted him and raised an alarm. Fearing he would be caught, the teenager attacked the girl with a knife, stabbing her multiple times and causing her death.

Following the murder, he washed the knife and his hands, changed his clothes, and attempted to act as though nothing had happened," said Cyberabad Police Commissioner Avinash Mohanty.

Police recovered several key pieces of evidence: the knife used in the crime, a handwritten note detailing the boy's theft plan, the clothes he wore during the offense, and the cricket bat.

The case remained unsolved for several days until a crucial witness came forward. A software engineer living in the same neighborhood, who was working from home on the day of the incident, observed the boy acting suspiciously while hiding and placing something on a nearby terrace. When this information was reported to the police, they immediately detained the boy.

The boy and the victim's younger brother had quarreled over the bat a few days earlier.

MISSION POSSIBLE

From bullock carts to moon: Isro in classrooms

NEW DELHI, PTI

From carrying rockets on bicycles and bullock carts in the 1960s to landmark space missions like Chandrayaan and Gaganyaan, India's rise among the global space powers is now part of NCERT's special modules.

Two modules titled 'India: A rising space power' highlight how the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), set up in 1962 under Vikram Sarabhai, grew into the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro).

"India's first rocket was so small and light that its parts were carried on bicycles and bullock carts. Scientists chose bicycles and bullock carts for the purpose! Motorised vehicles like cars and trucks create electric and magnetic fields that could disturb the delicate rocket equipment. So, using simple transport kept everything safe," the module read.

The two modules—one catering to middle-stage students and the other to secondary students—pay tribute to India's astronauts, Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma, who became the first Indian to travel to space in 1984 on a Soviet mission, and Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who in June 2025 became the first Indian to stay at the International Space Station.

The modules list several landmark missions, such as Chandrayaan-1 (2008), through which water molecules were discovered on the Moon; Mangalyaan (2013), which made India the first Asian country to reach Mars and the first in the world to succeed on its first attempt; Chandrayaan-2 (2019), whose orbiter continues to provide critical lunar data; and Aditya-L1 (2023), India's first solar observatory at Lagrange Point-1 that studies the Sun's outer atmosphere and solar storms.

They also talk about the upcoming Nasa (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)-Isro NISAR satellite, which will offer high-resolution data on Earth's ecosystems, ice cover, and natural disasters by surveying the world once every 12 days.

QUOTA PLANK Despite legal challenges, Congress banks on 'Kamareddy Declaration'

Expanding BC model beyond T'gana

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

In November 2023, just days before the Telangana Assembly polls, the Congress high command made a strategic move. It chose Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, hailing from an Other Backward Classes (OBC) community, to unveil the party's 'Kamareddy Declaration', a comprehensive promise offering numerous incentives, including 42% reservations, to backward classes.

Siddaramaiah was a symbolically powerful choice. As an OBC leader who rose to become chief minister of a neighboring state, his endorsement of the Kamareddy Declaration aligned perfectly with the grand old party's national narrative of 'jitni abadi, utna haq' (rights proportional to population), a phrase coined by Rahul Gandhi.

The strategy succeeded. In the Assembly election, the Congress decisively defeated the incumbent Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and formed its first government in Telangana since the state's formation a decade earlier.

Nearly 18 months after assuming power, the Congress government in Telangana began the painstaking process of fulfilling its campaign commitments. The administration conducted a comprehensive door-to-door survey -- Socio-Economic, Education, Employment, Political and Caste (SEEEPC) -- enumerated the BC population and passed Bills in Assembly to provide 42% reservation to the BCs. The Bills were referred to the President by the governor, and have been pending assent since then.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with Congress leader and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy during the 'Kamareddy Declaration' for backward classes ahead of the Telangana Assembly polls in 2023. X

With the legislative route taking a roadblock, the Congress has taken its advocacy to the streets. This is also because the 'Telangana model' represents more than regional politics, and serves as a potential template for the party's national strategy.

By gathering empirical data through extensive surveys before determining reservation percentages, the Congress demonstrates a data-driven approach designed to foster long-term political loyalty among this significant voter segment.

According to the SEEEPC survey of 2024, the most comprehensive study on castes conducted in Telangana, BCs account for approximately 56.33% of the state's population. This breaks down to 46.25% Hindu BCs and 10.08% Muslim BCs.

The Telangana Assembly passed two crucial Bills in March 2025, the Telangana Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats and Appointments) Bill, 2025, and the Telangana Backward Classes (Reservation in Rural and Urban Local Bodies) Bill, 2025.

These Bills propose significant increases in quotas — BCs would receive 42% (up from 29%), Scheduled Castes 18% (from 15%), and Scheduled Tribes 10% (from 6%). If approved, total reservations would reach 70%, far exceeding the Supreme Court's cap of 50%.

In July 2025, following a high court directive to complete the reservation process by September 30, 2025, the Telangana Cabinet approved 42% reservation for BCs in local body elections and promulgated an ordinance to implement this decision.

The Congress government has intensified the efforts to position itself as the champion of BC interests. Telangana Congress leaders recently camped in Delhi for three days, staging protests at Jantar Mantar demanding presidential assent for the Bills. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy led the demonstration, underscoring his government's commitment to the cause.

R Dileep Reddy, former Andhra Pradesh Information Commissioner and noted political analyst, said it is not unjust to provide 42% reservations to backward classes that, according to the SEEEPC survey, constitute more than half the population.

"The Bills now pending presidential approval represent an important step towards fulfilling the Congress party's Kamareddy Declaration and the larger national demand for reservations proportional to population," he told *DH*.

Reddy, however, suggested that demonstrating political will requires tangible action beyond legislative measures. "To show genuine commitment to BC empowerment while awaiting the President's approval, Congress should provide 42% tickets to BCs in the upcoming local body polls and consider appointing a BC deputy chief minister," he said.

Without such concrete steps, he argued, Congress cannot credibly claim to replicate the Telangana template nationally.

The path forward presents challenges. Another analyst, speaking on condition of anonymity, pointed out missed opportunities. "The I.N.D.I.A bloc had a wonderful opportunity with the Vice President polls. They should have fielded a BC candidate instead of an upper-caste Reddy."

Notably, the Opposition's V-P nominee, former Supreme Court judge B Sudershan Reddy, previously chaired the Independent Expert Working Group that analysed Telangana's SEEEPC survey and submitted a comprehensive 300-page report that formed the basis for the 42% reservation decision.

The reservation issue has taken a communal turn, with the BJP accusing the ruling Congress of orchestrating a conspiracy to benefit Muslims at the expense of Hindu BCs.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay has been particularly vocal in his opposition. "Under the guise of a BC Bill, 10% quota is being diverted to Muslims, with only 32% actually going to BCs," he claimed. "Congress has shattered the Kamareddy Declaration and betrayed BCs. This is not a BC declaration, it's undeniably a Muslim declaration," he said.

The BJP maintains that religion-based reservation contradicts the Constitution and demands that the full 42% quota be reserved exclusively for Hindu BCs.

As legal challenges remain regarding the breach of the 50% reservation cap and the process to secure protection under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution, the Telangana experiment remains under intense scrutiny. The outcome will likely influence Congress' approach to similar initiatives in other states and shape the national discourse on caste-based reservations in the years ahead.

CBI books Anil Ambani, RCom in Rs 2,929-crore 'bank fraud' case

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, PTI: The CBI searched the Mumbai residence of Reliance Communication Ltd. (RCOM) Director Anil Ambani on Saturday after recently registering a case over the alleged defrauding of State Bank of India of Rs 2,929.05 crore, officials said.

CBI teams conducted the searches at two locations in Mumbai on Saturday — the official premises of Reliance Communication and residential premises of Anil D Ambani, the agency said in a statement.

The CBI action took place after the agency registered an FIR on Thursday against Reliance Communication, Mumbai, its Director Anil D Ambani, unknown public servants and unknown others on the basis of a complaint from the SBI.

"Anil D Ambani denies all allegations and charges, and will duly defend himself," a spokesperson on behalf of the businessman said in a statement.

According to the SBI complaint, now part of the FIR, the company had an outstanding of over Rs 40,000 crore to various lenders with the public sector bank alone facing a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore, according to 2018 figures.

The CBI said it booked Ambani for allegedly committing offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust.

Uddhav Sena slams govt over India-Pakistan Asia Cup match

MUMBAI, DHNS: The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) has launched a strong attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya over India's participation in the Asia Cup match against Pakistan in Dubai.

"People take to the streets for pigeons, dogs, and elephants... that's good. But where was this humanity when people were killed in Pahalgam? The Sindoor was wiped out," said the Shiv Sena (UBT) supremo.

"Our defence minister said Operation Sindoor is still on, and the PM said hot Sindoor runs in his blood... when did it become a cold drink?" he asked.

Thackeray questioned how the Indian team can play Pakistan so soon after the Pahalgam terror attack.

'Mahayuti can't win'

Thackeray also claimed that the BJP-led Mahayuti can not win in Maharashtra if elections are conducted with honesty. "They (Mahayuti alliance) cannot win if elections are held honestly, certainly not in Maharashtra. Rahul Gandhi has exposed how they stole votes. He has torn their 'burqa' (veil)," former chief minister of Maharashtra said.

PM-CMs sacking bill: Rift in Oppn on JPC

Trinamool terms Parl panel a farce; Cong inclined to join

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Exposing chinks in I.N.D.I.A bloc over how to oppose the Bills proposing the removal of top political executives held in custody for 30 days, the Trinamool Congress and Samajwadi Party on Saturday decided that they will not join the Joint Committee of Parliament examining the bills, even as Congress indicated its inclination to participate.

An official statement by the Trinamool said, "We opposed The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, at the stage of introduction, and in our view, the JPC is a farce. Therefore, we are not nominating anyone from AITC." SP sources said they were also not nominating any MP to the panel.

TMC Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O'Brien said in a blog post that both parties took the decision because the Modi government is pushing to form the JPC to examine an "unconstitutional bill" and it is a "stunt performed to create a distraction" from Special Intensive Revision.

To record opinion

Top Congress sources indicated that they are inclined to join the Parliamentary panel, as absence from the committee would mean that their opinions and objections would not be recorded. RJD sources said no call on the committee has been taken yet.

DEREK O'BRIEN
TMC Rajya Sabha leader

"Whenever important amendments are proposed by an opposition MP, the amendments are defeated in the committee by a show of hands. The ruling party uses its brute majority to do this.

Sources said the Trinamool and SP felt that by joining the committee, they were playing into the hands of the BJP, which wants to raise a bogey on corruption.

"The BJP wants to keep the pot boiling. See what they are doing with the JPC on 'One Nation, One Election' Bills. We don't want to help the BJP do the same thing for the next six months and create a narrative on corruption," a senior leader said.

Amid vociferous Opposition protest, Home Minister Amit Shah had last Wednesday introduced The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Act, 2025, in Lok Sabha, seeking the removal of the prime minister, chief ministers, and central and state ministers if they are arrested and remain in custody for 30 days in a row on offences that attract a jail term of at least five years.

The Bill was later referred to a joint committee of Parliament.

REACHING OUT

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during an interaction with makhana farmers in Bihar. PTI

'Talks more, works less': Kharge slams Modi

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that he "talks more but works much less" unlike his predecessor Manmohan Singh, and the amount of work done during the UPA time has not even been matched by 10% in the past 11 years.

Addressing professionals chosen for the Dr Manmohan Singh Fellows Programme, he recalled his association with the former PM and said he was always present in Parliament during sessions and used to answer questions, respond to the opposition, and engage in debate, but the current prime minister considers this beneath his dignity.

"The amount of work done in his (Singh's) time has not even been matched by 10% in the last 11 years. Leaders who are educated and well-read possess greater knowledge, they work more, and they do not focus excessively on publicity," the Congress president said.

Mallikarjun Kharge

'Huge role'

With democratic institutions "captured and under attack" and at a time politics is more about "showmanship and propaganda", Kharge said professionals have a huge role to play at a time data and technology can be used to expose things like "vote theft".

He said those selected for the fellowship have special skills in areas like technology, research, communication, marketing, finance, medicine, foreign policy or defence, and they must use these skills for the welfare and protection of the people.

"Connect yourselves with the struggles of ordinary people, and bring honesty, discipline, and sensitivity into politics. For example, it is with the help of data and technology that we were able to expose the large-scale issue of vote theft. Similarly, on issues of social justice such as caste census, we need professionals to collect and analyse data," he said.

NHRC seeks report on Jalgaon mob lynching

MUMBAI, DHNS: More than a week after a 21-year-old Muslim youth was abducted, assaulted and murdered by a mob as he was seen talking to a girl from another community in Jalgaon, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a report from Maharashtra's Chief Secretary (CS) and Director General of Police (DGP) within two weeks.

The incident took place on August 11. The youth was identified as Suleiman Rahimkhan Pathan, a resident of Betawad Khurd village at Jamner in Jalgaon district..

Suleiman had recently passed the 12th standard and was preparing to join the police service.

On the day of the attack, he had traveled to Jamner to submit his police application.

While he was in a cafe with the girl, a mob dragged him out and assaulted him. Later, he was taken to his village and thrashed.

The youth suffered multiple injuries and was rushed to the Jalgaon District Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on admission.

India to drive 20% of global growth: Modi

NEW DELHI, PTI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the country will soon become the world's third-largest major economy and asserted that the government will continue with reforms to make India a developed nation by 2047.

Modi said the next-generation GST reform process will be completed before this Diwali. It will simplify the GST law and bring down prices.

The PM asked the private sector to increase investment in research & development in various sectors, including clean energy, quantum technology, battery storage, advanced materials and biotechnology.

The PM said India is the fastest-growing major economy in the world today. "We are soon going to become the third-largest economy in the world. Experts are saying that India's contribution to the world's growth is going to be around 20% very soon."

The growth and resilience seen in the Indian economy are due to macroeconomic stability in the past 10 years, Modi said. On key economic fundamentals, the PM said India's fiscal deficit has been reduced to 4.4% despite challenges posed by the Covid pandemic.

Jaishankar reminds US of Laden's killing in Pakistan

NEW DELHI, PTI: The United States and Pakistan have a history with each other, but they also have a history of overlooking that history, Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday, reminding of the killing of al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden near Islamabad in 2011.

Jaishankar's remarks came in response to a question about the US-Pakistan realignment under the Trump administration.

"They have a history with each other. And they have a history of overlooking that history. It is not the first time we have seen things," he said at an event.

"And the interesting thing is when you look sometimes at the certificates that say somebody in the military will give. It is the same military which went to Abbottabad and found you-know-who there," he said.

"The issue, in a way, is when countries are very focused on doing politics of convenience, they keep trying to do this. Some of it can be tactical, some of it can have some other benefits or calculations," he said.

Laden was killed by US Navy SEALs on May 2, 2011, in Abbottabad, a garrison town located near Pakistan's capital Islamabad. The US did not inform Pakistan before carrying out the top-secret operation.

S JAISHANKAR
External Affairs Minister

"It's funny to have people who work for a pro-business American administration accusing other people of doing business. That's really curious. If you have a problem buying oil or refined products from India, don't buy it. Nobody forces you to buy it. But Europe buys, America buys, so you don't like it, don't buy it.

In June, US President Donald Trump hosted Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir in the White House.

In his remarks, Jaishankar also talked about the strength of India-US ties.

"Obviously, I respond to the situation or the challenge of the day. But I also do so always keeping in mind the larger structural sort of strengths of the relationship and the confidence that comes from it," Jaishankar said.

"So, I take it in that spirit. I know what I am about. I know what my strengths are, and I know the importance and relevance of my relationship. That is what guides me."

VLCC fined for misleading ads

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Central Consumer Protection Authority has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 lakh on wellness beauty services firm, VLCC Ltd, for publishing 'misleading advertisements' on fat-loss and slimming treatments using CoolSculpting machine.

The consumer watchdog on Saturday also directed VLCC to mention, "The CoolSculpting procedure is used for treatment of the focal fat deposits and not weight loss" — in both advertisements and consent forms, in a easily readable manner.

POLITICS & PROSPERITY

Naidu is richest CM with Rs 936-crore assets

HYDERABAD, DHNS

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has emerged as the richest CM in India, with assets worth Rs 936 crore, according to a report by the NGO Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR).

A closer examination of his wealth reveals that the majority comes from the 2,26,11,525 shares he holds in Heritage Foods Ltd (HFL), a listed dairy company he founded in 1992.

Delhi-based ADR and the National Election Watch (NEW) analysed 30 current CMs' self-sworn affidavits — filed before the last elections. Of the 30 CMs analysed, two (7%) were billionaires, with their combined assets totalling Rs 1,632 crore.

Naidu's Rs 936-crore declared assets make him the wealthiest CM in India. At the time of the filing of his election affidavit, each HFL share was valued at Rs 337.85, resulting in an asset value of Rs 763.93 crore.

Sources close to Naidu noted that the value of promoter shares held by the Nara family in the 33-year-old publicly-listed dairy company appreciated significantly over the past three decades. The family owns 41.3% of HFL's total shareholding.

The company's market capitalisation grew dramatically from Rs 25 crore in 1995 to Rs 4,500 crore in 2025. It reached its peak valuation of Rs 6,755 crore in June 2024, with the highest-ever shareholder count of 1,81,907.

The remaining portion of Naidu's wealth includes personal loans, gold and silver jewellery owned by his wife Nara Bhuvaneswari, who serves as vice-chairperson and managing director of HFL, and properties the family jointly owns in Kuppam, Chittoor, and Hyderabad.

LAND OF DISPUTE 21 nations, including allies, condemn action of Netanyahu govt

Israel's new West Bank settlements a blow to Palestinian statehood hopes

NYT NEWS SERVICE

Israel gave final approval on Wednesday to a settlement project in the heart of the occupied West Bank that supporters and critics alike say will deliver a major blow to the territorial contiguity Palestinians hope will form part of a future independent state.

The project, known as E1, had been delayed for more than two decades, often following pressure from the United States. But the Trump administration has been far less critical of settlements than previous US governments or most of the international community, which generally considers them illegal and obstacles to peace.

Around 500,000 Israeli settlers and about 3 million Palestinians live in the West Bank, where the Israeli military maintains overriding control. Troops frequently raid Palestinian cities and restrict Palestinian movement. Settlers can vote in Israeli elections, while their Palestinian neighbours cannot.

Under the plan, some 3,400 housing units would be built on one of the most sensitive tracts of land in the West Bank: E1, short for East One. The site lies just east of Jerusalem, which both Israelis and Palestinians claim as their capital.

Human rights groups and European countries argue that building in E1 would effectively bisect the central West Bank, undermining the possibility of a Palestinian state. They warn it would hem in Palestinian neighbourhoods of east Jerusalem, preventing them from expanding into the West Bank.

"This could have disastrous consequences for Palestinian contiguity and call into question the feasibility of a Palestinian state," said Alon Cohen-Lifshitz, an urban planning expert at the Israeli rights group Bimkom. He added that settlement construction could also put hundreds of Palestinians living there at risk of expulsion.

A view of a deserted mosque in the settlement of Sa-Nur, south of Jenin, in the occupied West Bank on Saturday. Israel plans to rebuild Sa-Nur, a settlement that was evacuated two decades ago. Sa-Nur's settlers were evicted in 2005 as part of Israel's so-called disengagement policy. AFP

The Palestinian Authority condemned the project as a "dangerous escalation." Several European countries, including some of Israel's traditional allies, have also denounced the E1 plan. "If implemented, it would divide a Palestinian state in two, breach international law and critically undermine the two-state solution," said David Lammy, the British foreign secretary. A spokesperson for UN Secretary-General António Guterres said he too condemned the move and called for an immediate halt to settlement activity.

Britain and France were among 21 countries to sign a joint statement on Thursday calling Israel's approval of the E1 project "unacceptable and a violation of international law." "We condemn this decision and call for its immediate reversal in the strongest terms," said the statement, whose signatories also included Australia, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the EU's foreign affairs chief.

The statement cited Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's remarks that the plan "will make a two-state solution impossible by dividing any Palestinian state and restricting Palestinian access to Jerusalem."

For Israeli hardliners, however, weakening prospects for a Palestinian state is the point. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his allies reject ending the occupation and creating a Palestinian state, arguing it would benefit Hamas.

Smotrich hailed E1's approval as a step toward erasing the idea of Palestinian statehood. "Every town, every neighbourhood, every housing unit is another nail in the coffin of this dangerous idea," he said.

Even as global attention has centred on the war in Gaza, Israel has pressed ahead with settlement expansion. By late July, authorities had advanced plans for more than 19,000 housing units — the highest figure in years, according to Peace Now, a settlement watchdog. Spurred by Smotrich, the government has sought to establish new settlements and retroactively legalise outposts built without permits by Jewish radicals. This has coincided with a surge in violent and sometimes deadly attacks by Jewish extremists against Palestinian communities. "This government is trying to exploit every minute in power to create facts on the ground which will prevent a Palestinian state," said Hagit Ofran, a researcher at Peace Now.

For nearly two decades, the E1 plans were tied up in Israel's zoning process. Strong international opposition, including from the Obama and Biden administrations, largely kept the project on hold.

But earlier this summer, the Israeli government suddenly revived the proposal, said Cohen-Lifshitz, leaving rights groups with little time to submit objections. Within a month, authorities convened a hearing for final objections before announcing its approval.

Asked about the administration's stance on E1, US ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said it was a matter for Israel to decide. "Whether or not there should be a massive development in E1 is a decision for the government of Israel to make," Huckabee said.

Last week, Smotrich appeared to link the decision to a recent diplomatic push by France, the United Kingdom and others to recognise an independent Palestinian state.

"Today, whoever tries abroad to recognise a Palestinian state — will receive our answer on the ground," Smotrich said.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Crew members of the Indian Navy's INS Tamal pay homage at the Suda Bay War Cemetery, in Crete, Greece on Saturday. PTI

Sri Lankan ex-prez Wickremesinghe shifted to ICU after remand

▸ Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe was on Saturday shifted to the intensive care unit of the Colombo National Hospital, a day after he was arrested and refused bail over alleged misuse of state funds during his tenure, PTI reports from Colombo.

Wickremesinghe, 76, was taken to the main Magazine Remand prison close to midnight on Friday after the Colombo Fort magistrate's court remanded him till August 26. He was admitted to the prison hospital as his blood sugar and blood pressure levels were high, prison spokesman Jagath Weerasinghe said. By afternoon, there was no improvement and the prison doctors opined that he should be transferred to the Colombo National Hospital.

Wickremesinghe was kept in the emergency care unit first but was later transferred to the intensive care unit of the Colombo National Hospital, director of the hospital Dr Rukshan Bellana told reporters. The former president was arrested at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters on Friday, where he was summoned to record a statement in connection with an investigation into the alleged misuse of government funds amounting to Sri Lankan rupees 16.6 million.

Saudi Arabia helps Indian return

▸ Riyadh on Saturday said it intervened to secure exit clearance from Saudi Arabia for an Indian man who faced significant financial liabilities that prevented his return, PTI reports from Riyadh.

Shavej Hamid was hospitalised in Saudi Arabia for four months following an accident and "is returning to India today," the Indian Embassy in Riyadh said. "Despite facing an exit ban due to substantial dues, the Embassy's intervention ensured that most of these were waived, and we also facilitated the payment of his government fines," the embassy said in a post on X. The embassy said it intervened to secure exit clearance for him despite an exit ban and heavy dues and that it closely coordinated with medical authorities during Hamid's hospitalisation to ensure he received proper care and treatment.

European postal services halt US shipments over tariffs

Europe warns of major disruption as US duties take effect August 29

ATHENS, AP/PTI

Multiple postal services across Europe announced on Saturday that they are suspending the shipment of many packages to the United States amid uncertainty over new import duties.

Postal services in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Italy said they would stop shipping most merchandise to the US with immediate effect. France and Austria will follow on Monday, and the UK on Tuesday.

Under a decree signed last month by President Donald Trump, international goods that were previously exempt from US tariffs — those valued under $800 — will be subject to import duties from August 29. Letters, books, gifts and small parcels worth less than $100 will remain exempt.

A trade framework agreed by the US and the European Union last month set a 15% tariff on the vast majority of products shipped from the EU.

Many European postal operators say they are pausing deliveries because they cannot guarantee parcels will arrive in the US before August 29. They cite uncertainty over which goods are covered by the new rules and a lack of time to implement them. From Saturday, Deutsche Post and DHL Parcel Germany said they "will no longer be able to accept and transport parcels and postal items containing goods from business customers destined for the US."

Postnord, the Nordic logistics company, and Italy's postal service announced similar suspensions effective the same day.

"In the absence of different instructions from US authorities ... Poste Italiane will be forced, like other European postal operators, to temporarily suspend acceptance of all shipments containing goods destined for the United States, starting August 23. Mail shipments not containing merchandise will continue to be accepted," Poste Italiane said.

5 killed after tour bus carrying Indians crashes in New York

NEW YORK, PTI: At least five people were killed when a tour bus returning to New York City from Niagara Falls with 54 passengers, including travellers from India and China, crashed on a highway outside Buffalo, according to media reports.

The crash occurred on the New York State Thruway about 48 kilometres east of Buffalo at 12.22 pm (local time) on Friday, Trooper James O'Callaghan, a spokesman for the State Police, was quoted as saying by The New York Times.

Police have not yet released the names of those who died but said an earlier report that one of the deceased was a child was incorrect, according to The Buffalo News.

Trump loyalist Sergio Gor to be US envoy to India

WASHINGTON, PTI

Sergio Gor, the White House personnel director and a loyal member of President Donald Trump's inner circle, has been nominated as the next American envoy to India, a move that comes amid an estrangement of ties between the two countries over trade-related issues.

Sergio Gor

President Trump, announcing the nomination of 38-year-old Gor to the key ambassadorial position, said he will also serve as the special envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs. "For the most populous region in the World, it is important that I have someone I can fully trust to deliver on my agenda and help us 'Make America Great Again'," the president said on social media.

Gor played a major role in the political action committee (PAC) of Trump's campaign in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election and his influence increased manifold after he was tasked of vetting political appointees in the new administration. In January, the then US ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, stepped down from the post, paving the way for the Trump administration to appoint its new envoy.

US Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick welcomed Trump's decision to nominate Gor as the next ambassador to India.

The process of confirmation by the Senate of Gor's new assignment will be the next step. "I am pleased to announce that I am promoting Sergio Gor to be our next United States Ambassador to the Republic of India, and Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs," Trump said.

As director of presidential personnel, Sergio and his team have hired nearly 4,000 'America First Patriots' across every department of our federal government in record time, he said.

The US president said Gor will remain in his current role at the White House until his confirmation by the Senate. In his reaction, Gor said he was "beyond grateful" to Trump.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam (left) receives Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar (second from left) at Hazrat Shahjalal Airport in Dhaka on Saturday. AFP

Pak FM visits B'desh to rebuild ties

▸ Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar arrived in Dhaka on Saturday for a rare two-day visit, aimed at rebuilding ties with Bangladesh following the ouster of longtime prime minister Sheikh Hasina, PTI reports from Dhaka.

A special flight carrying Dar, the most senior Pakistani leader to visit Bangladesh since 2012, arrived in Dhaka, with Islamabad calling it a "significant milestone" in bilateral relations. Hina Rabbani Khar was the last Pakistani foreign minister to visit Dhaka in November 2012. Bangladesh Foreign Ministry officials said the top Pakistani diplomat was scheduled to sign up to half a dozen agreements.

Koreas clash over border firing

▸ North Korea accused South Korea of a "serious provocation" on Saturday after South Korean troops fired warning shots at its soldiers setting up barriers along their tense border, AP/PTI reports from Seoul.

Ko Jong Chol, vice chief of the North Korean People's Army's General Staff, noted that Tuesday's warning shots coincided with the South Korea-US summertime drills and accused Seoul of trying to raise tensions. Shortly after Ko's statement, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed it had fired warning shots at North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line in the central border region.

Sharifs, Bhuttos to jointly contest Pak bypolls

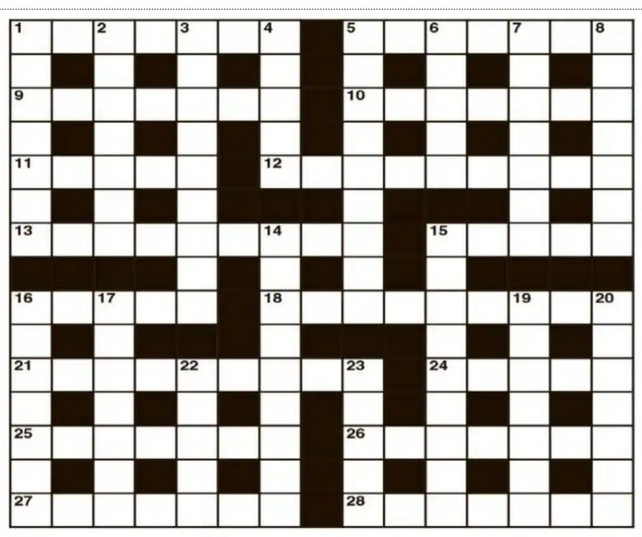
ISLAMABAD, PTI: Pakistan's two major political parties in the current ruling dispensation – the PML-N and the PPP – on Saturday announced they would jointly contest the upcoming bypolls.

The decision by the Sharifs-led Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Bhuttos-led Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to cooperate in the national and provincial elections was announced at a press conference here.

Several seats of the national and provincial assemblies became vacant last month after the conviction of leaders of the incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for their involvement in the May 9, 2023 riots.

According to the schedule issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the by-elections will be held on September 18 for the NA-66 Wazirabad, NA-129 Lahore-XI-II, and PP-87 Mianwali-III constituencies.

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2642 ◆



ACROSS

1 Severe (7)
5 Sever (4,3)
9 An absurd pretence (7)
10 As soon as seen (2,5)
11 Rubbish (5)
12 As final act before going to bed (4,5)
13 Take to pieces (9)
15 Military musical instrument (5)
16 US New England state (5)
18 In control (2,3,4)
21 Elucidate (4,5)
24 Haggard (5)
25 English actor and director, d.1989 (7)
26 An upper limit (7)
27 Sanitary principles (7)
28 Profess falsely (7)

DOWN

1 Unquestionable (7)
2 Mystified (2,1,4)
3 Interpret significance of (9)
4 Fisherman's wicker basket (5)
5 Wrinkles at corner of eye (5,4)
6 Start (5)
7 Still in progress (7)
8 Weariness (7)
14 Considerably (2,1,6)
15 Subsistence level (9)
16 Large extinct elephant (7)
17 Faint suspicion (7)
19 Intentionally ambiguous (7)
20 Organised (7)
22 Set of attuned bells (5)
23 Summarise (5)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4002

CRYPTIC

ACROSS: 9, Take down 10, B-OO 11, Re-cor-d 12, Hea-r-ts 13, St-rides 14, Rock 15, Trotted out 17, Observed 18, Tellers 19, Beef 21, Ass-ist 24, Standing corrected 27, Reve-a-l 29, Well 30, Al-m-L-ess 33, A-scribe-s 35, Th-under-Ous 36, Twit 37, Rea-sons 38, C-U-rate 40, Unbent 41, Eye (aye) 42, Rattling.
DOWN: 1, Take orders 2, Bear 3, F-orswe-ar 4, And so-on 5, Cold comfort 6, Grass snake 7, Scorer 8, Crackers 10, Burst 16, Ti-lla-ge 20, Ex-CE-l(ight) 22, Sett-L-er 23, In two shakes 25, De-liberate 26, Disrupting 28, East wind 31, Ind-I-cat-e 32, C-urso-ry 34, R-otter 35, Th-Os-e 39, Role (roll).

EASY

ACROSS: 9, Patience 10, Sir 11, Reason 12, Stable 13, English 14, Inch 15, Beefburger 17, Brighten 18, Shutter 19, Plea 21, Hamlet 24, Private enterprise 27, Single 29, Sort 30, Contour 33, Resolute 35, Tenderness 36, List 37, Titanic 38, Ignore 40, Plural 41, Vet 42, Linesman.
DOWN: 1, Battleship 2, Limb 3, Insecure 4, Revenge 5, Trailblazer 6, Archbishop 7, Radish 8, Concrete 10, Sugar 16, Fitting 20, Lunar 22, Moisten 23, Perspective 25, Adequately 26, Equestrian 28, Inedible 31, Obedient 32, Knuckle 34, Outcry 35, Tenet 39, Nest.

SU DO KU X - 3656

		2						
				2		3		
	5	6		3				
1			7		4		3	
		9						
		5					6	
				4	3			
	2	1		7				
	9				1	5		

SOLUTION TO 3655

4	2	8	7	3	1	5	9	6
6	1	3	9	2	5	8	4	7
7	5	9	8	4	6	3	2	1
1	8	4	5	6	2	9	7	3
9	6	2	4	7	3	1	5	8
5	3	7	1	9	8	2	6	4
3	4	5	2	1	7	6	8	9
2	9	1	6	8	4	7	3	5
8	7	6	3	5	9	4	1	2

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

IN BRIEF

Nilavoli, Derrin star for K'taka

Derrin Treesa Sumesh and Nilavoli Sethurayar scored a brace each to power Karnataka to a 6-0 victory over Punjab at the Sub Junior Girl's National Football Championships in Jorhat, Assam on Saturday, reports DHNS.

The state girls will face Bihar in their next contest schedule to be at the Bapuji Stadium, Mariani on Monday.

Result: Karnataka: 6 (Derrin Treesa Sumesh 20th, 65th, Nishka Chawala 34th, Nilavoli Sethurayar 49th, 87th, Janhavi Reddy 62nd) bt Punjab: 0.

State trials for footballers

The Karnataka State Football Association (KSFA) will conduct selection trials to pick the squad for the 30th Senior Women's National Football Championship for Rajmata Jijabai Trophy, reports DHNS.

Only those footballers who have played either Karnataka Women's League, 'A' Division League or senior women's district events are eligible for the trials to be held on August 25 at the Bangalore Football Stadium from 7:30 am.

Those interested come with a photocopy of their birth certificates and Aadhar Card at the time of reporting.

Haryana win junior hockey nationals

BENGALURU, DHNS: Haryana scored a thrilling 3-2 win over Odisha to emerged as the champions of the 15th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship in Jalandhar, Punjab on Saturday.

Aftre a goalless first quarter, Odisha showcased skill by converting two successive penalty corners courtesy of Deepak Pradhan (17th) and Pratap Toppo (19th).

However, Haryana turned the game in the final quarter of the match when Chirag (50th) scored his side's first goal through a penalty corner. In the very next minute, Nitin netted the first of his two field goals (51th, 60th) before he found the back of the net in the final minute to help Haryana take home the title.

Punjab won their 3rd-4th place match against Uttar Pradesh 4-3 in shootout after a 3-3 draw at the end of regulation time to clinch the bronze medal.

Argentina to play friendly in Kerala in Nov

KOCHI, PTI: Putting speculations to rest, reigning world champions Argentina have announced that they will play a FIFA friendly against an unnamed opponent in Kerala in November this year.

The match will take place between November 10 and 18, and it could happen in Kochi or Thiruvananthapuram.

Kerala Sports Minister V Adburahiman later confirmed the development.

◆ ON TV ◆

FOOTBALL

EPL: Crystal Palace vs Nottingham Forest, Everton vs Brighton **(both 6:30 pm)**, Fulham vs Man United **(9 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

La Liga: Osasuna vs Valencia **(8:30 pm)**, Real Sociedad vs Espanyol, Villarreal vs Girona **(both 11 pm)**, Oviedo vs Real Madrid **(1 am, Monday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

TENNIS

US Open: First round **(8:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

CRICKET

3rd ODI: Australia vs South Africa **(10 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network.**

Maharaja Trophy: Bengaluru Blasters vs Mangalore Dragons **(3:15 pm)**, Shivamogga Lions vs Mysore Warriors **(7:15 pm)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

TENNIS US OPEN

All eyes on 'Sincaraz' at final Slam

Sinner and Alcaraz have ruled the season with iron fist

NEW YORK, AP

OK, sure, maybe it wouldn't be rational to say there's no point in actually holding the full U S Open and instead just fast-forwarding to the inevitable matchup for the men's championship between Jannik Sinner — who has declared himself fit — and Carlos Alcaraz on Sept. 7.

Seems reasonable, though.

"We know," Novak Djokovic acknowledged, "they're the dominant force right now."

When singles action begins Sunday at Flushing Meadows, a change from the usual Monday start, there are cases to be made for various players to make their way to the women's final. The top three in the rankings — No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, No. 2 Iga Swiatek and No. 3 Coco Gauff — have won the past three U S Open titles, for example. Other past major champions such as Naomi Osaka or Elena Rybakina have performed well lately; maybe a new face will emerge.

Sinner and Alcaraz have won the last seven Grand Slam titles

When it comes to the men, there really is just one name that matters in this post-Big Three era, and that name is "Sincaraz," the silly, made-up, "Fedal"-style mashup of the guys who are ranked No. 1 (Sinner) and No. 2 (Alcaraz) and have claimed nine of the last 12 Grand Slam trophies.

Djokovic took the other three in that span.

There is nothing quite like it in the women's game at the moment. The past five Slams were won by five players: Swiatek (Wimbledon in July), Gauff (French Open in June), Madison Keys (Australian Open in January), Sabalenka (last year's U S Open) and Barbora Krejcikova (last year's Wimbledon).

Sincaraz' is a cut above as the US Open starts

"Sinner and Alcaraz," said Marcos Giron, an American who has been ranked 37th and faced both, "are bringing a ridiculous level, week in and week out."

Look at the ATP rankings, which either could lead after the U S Open. Look at the titles. Look at the past two Grand Slam finals, with Alcaraz erasing a two-set deficit and saving three championship points to win the French Open in June, before Sinner won in four sets at Wimbledon in July. Look at the most recent Masters 1000 tournament, the Cincinnati Open, where Sinner didn't drop a set en route to Monday's final but quit because he was feeling ill, ceding the trophy to Alcaraz.

That ended Sinner's 26-match winning streak on hard courts; Alcaraz was responsible for the previous defeat, too. Alcaraz collected his tour-leading sixth trophy this season and has won 39 of his most recent 41 contests.

Jannik Sinner (left) and Carlos Alcaraz, with last seven Grand Slams between them in a row, are favourites at the US Open. AFP

Top seed Sabalenka seeks rare repeat; Gauff shakes up her team

Aryna Sabalenka (left) and Coco Gauff. AFP

NEW YORK, AFP: It has been more than a decade since the US Open had a repeat women's champion -- but world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka heads into her title defense at Flushing Meadows aiming to buck that trend.

"My thought is to change that," the Belarusian star said Friday as she spoke to reporters at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, where the final Grand Slam of the season begins on Sunday.

"But, wow, that's insane, you know, how unpredictable women's tennis is, right? Should we change it? Should we try at least to change it?"

The last woman to win back-to-back US Open titles was Serena Williams, who won three in a row from 2012 through 2014.

Sabalenka said the pressure to repeat at a Slam is intense, but magnified in the boisterous atmosphere of New York.

Meanwhile, Coco Gauff says she didn't hesitate to shake up her team just days before the US Open, hoping a new specialist coach can help shore up the serve.

"It was a very sudden decision" to hire biomechanics expert Gavin MacMillan, Gauff acknowledged on Friday as she spoke to reporters ahead of the final Grand Slam of the year.

"Gavin became available. I just felt this was the best decision for my game at least and I had to go with what I was feeling."

LIVE 8:30 PM; STAR SPORTS NETWORK, JIOHOTSTAR

NorthEast United retain Durand Cup title

Defending champions NorthEast United FC dished out a dominant performance to thrash debutants Diamond Harbour FC 6-1 in the grand finale of the 134th Indian Oil Durand Cup, clinching their second successive title in Kolkata.

On a night of relentless attacking football at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, the Highlanders had six different scorers — Asheer Akhtar (30th), Parthib Gogoi (45+1st), Thoi Singh (50th), Jairo (81st), Andy (85th) and Alaaeddine Ajaraie (90+3rd).

Diamond Harbour pulled one back in the 68th minute when Jobby Justin's header deflected in off Luka Majcen.

The final began at a brisk pace, with both sides cautious in possession. But it was the defending champions who struck first. A clever cut-back from Samte in the 28th minute found Parthib, whose effort was parried away by Mirshad. From the resulting corner came the breakthrough.

Mysuru's Padmapriya wins; to play Asian Jr C'ships

BENGALURU, DHNS: Young Karnataka player Padmapriya Ramesh Kumar underlined her potential by capturing the under-14 girls singles title with ease at the AITA National Series tennis tournament in Shamirpet, Telangana on Saturday.

In the finals, the Mysuru girl barely let Parinitha Vattaprambil find her footing before sailing past the finish line with a 6-2, 6-1 verdict.

On Friday, Padmapriya, partnering Parinitha, had fallen short in the title clash to finish runners-up in the doubles section.

The 13-year-old had more good news to cheer about after receiving an invite from the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) to participate in the GSPDP Asian U-14 Junior Championships to be held in Manila, Philippines from September 16-20.

The winner of this competition - played between the top 24 Asian boys and girls - will be rewarded with an opportunity to join the ITF International 14&U team to Florida, USA at the end of this year.

Padmapriya R Kumar

Spurs expose City's old woes

Londoners hand Guardiola's men a 2-0 defeat; Chelsea coast to big win

MANCHESTER, AFP

Manchester City's troubles from last season were exposed once more in a humbling 2-0 home defeat to Tottenham on Saturday that raised questions over their quest to regain the Premier League title.

Brennan Johnson and Joao Palhinha struck for the Europa League winners just before half-time as Spurs went top of the table, making it a perfect start for Thomas Frank after two league games in charge.

City's run of four consecutive titles came to a spectacular end last season as they finished a distant third behind Liverpool and Arsenal.

A 4-0 thrashing of Wolves on the opening weekend of the campaign showed glimpses of a new-look City back to their best.

Tottenham Hotspur's Brennan Johnson (left) and Joao Palhinha (second from left) scored their team's first and second goals respectively to humble Manchester City 2-0. AFP

Chelsea win big

On Friday, Chelsea came from behind to thrash West Ham 5-1 and leave former Blues boss Graham Potter under pressure just two games into the season.

Potter has won just five of 21 games since taking charge in January and has endured a miserable start to the new campaign after a 3-0 defeat to newly-promoted Sunderland last weekend.

Lucas Paqueta's strike gave the home side hope early on, but they quickly capitulated.

"It was a tough evening for us," said Potter. "Against a top team, to concede the goals in the manner we have, it is an impossible task."

Joao Pedro scored the first of Chelsea's three goals from corners before Pedro Neto and Enzo Fernandez added to the world champions' lead.

Results: Manchester: 0 lt to Tottenham: 2 (Brennan Johnson 35th, Joao Palhinha 45th+2); West Ham: 1 (Paqueta 6th) lt to Chelsea: 5 (Pedro 15th, Neto 23rd, Fernandez 34th, Caicedo 54th, Chalobah 58th); Bournemouth: 1 (Tavernier 4th) bt Wolves: 0; Brentford: 1 (Ouattara 12th) bt Aston Villa: 0; Burnley: 2 (Cullen 47th, Anthony 88th) bt Sunderland: 0.

Shafali, Bist lift India 'A' with fighting fifties

BRISBANE, PTI: India A women survived a hundred by Sianna Ginger and Amy Edgar's four-wicket haul to take a good grip over Australia A on the penultimate day of the four-day lone unofficial Test here on Saturday.

India A closed the day at 260 for eight, for an overall lead of 254 runs, after opener Shafali Verma (52) and middle-order batter Raghavi Bist (86) made fighting half-centuries.

Earlier, Australia, starting from overnight 158 for five, posted 305 in their first innings to take a slender lead of six runs. Ginger, overnight 24, helped the home side recover from a shaky 158 for five, in the company of late order batters with a gritty 103 off 138 balls.

Ginger and Nicole Faltum added 102 runs for a determined sixth wicket stand as Australia managed to overhaul India's total.

Brief scores: India A: 299 all out and 260/8 in 73 overs (Shafali Verma 52, Raghavi Bist 86; Amy Edgar 4-53) vs Australia A: 305 all out in 76.2 overs (Sianna Ginger 103, Nicole Faltum 54; Saima Thakor 3-31, Radha Yadav 2-68).

Shooters Arjun, Elavenil clinch air rifle mixed gold

SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN), PTI: India's Arjun Babuta and Elavenil Valarivan bagged the gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event of the 16th Asian Shooting Championship here on Saturday.

The Indian pair outclassed China's Dingke Lu and Xinlu Peng 17-11 to finish on top of the podium. The Chinese pair was leading in the initial round, but the Indians, who faltered early with shots of 9.5 and 10.1, made a stirring comeback in the later rounds to claim the gold.

The effort meant that both Tamil Nadu's Elavenil and the 26-year-old Babuta from Punjab have now won two gold medals each at the prestigious tournament. Elavenil had finished on top of the table in the 10m air rifle women's competition, while Babuta had combined with Rudrankksh Patil and Kiran Jadhav to clinch the team gold in the men's 10m air rifle event.

Elavenil Valarivan (left) and Arjun Babuta. FILE PHOTOS

Another gold in juniors

Meanwhile, the Indian pair of Shambhavi Shravan and Naraen Pranav grabbed the gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team junior event. They beat China 16-12 after a dominant showing in the latter part of the series.

The Indian team had finished third behind the two Chinese teams in the qualification but since only one team from a nation can compete, the Chinese 2 team, comprising Tang Huiqi and Han Yinan, qualified for the final after topping the qualification.

The Indian team totalled 629.5 to finish behind China 2 (632.3) and China 1 (630). Shambhavi had a series of 105.4, 105.2 and 104.4 while Pranav began slow with 103.7, but improved in the next two series, scoring 105.7 and 105.1.

Hubli Tigers roar past Mysore Warriors with dominant win

BENGALURU, DHNS: Shreesha Achar's three-fer and Karthikeya KP's **(in pic)** half-century saw Hubli Tigers defeat Mysore Warriors by five wickets at the Maharaja Trophy in Mysuru on Saturday.

Shreesha's spell of 3/11 restricted the Warriors to 129 for 8 before Devdutt Padikkal's 44 off 19 along with Karthikeya's unbeaten 52 off 32 completed their second consecutive victory.

The left-handed Karthikey struck five fours and three sixes, including a 22-run over off Dhanush Gowda in the fifth, propelling the Tigers miles ahead of the equation.

Karthikeya closed the game in style, smashing a six and a four in the 15th over to bring up a 32-ball half-century and complete the chase.

Earlier, Warriors endured a lacklustre outing, with only Karthik SU (53 off 37) holding firm.

Mystics beat Blasters

Smaran Ravichandran's 52-ball 89 helped Gulbarga Mystics secure a six-wicket win over Bengaluru Blasters in the second match of the day.

With Hubli Tigers and Gulbarga Mystics posting victories, they joined Mangaluru Dragons and Bengaluru Blasters in entering the playoffs.

Brief scores: Mysore Warriors: 129/8 in 20 overs (Karthik SU 53, Srinivas Sharath 27; Shreesha Achar 3-11, Yashraj Punja 2-19) lt to Hubli Tigers: 132/5 in 14.2 overs (Padikkal 44, Karthikeya KP 52 n.o.; K Gowtham 3-21). **Result:** Hubli Tigers won by five wickets.

Bengaluru Blasters: 164/7 in 20 overs (Suraj Ahuja 54, Rohan Naveen 34 n.o.; V Vyshak 3-34) lt to Gulbarga Mystics: 167/4 in 19.2 overs (Smaran Ravichandran 89, Praveen Dubey 29 n.o.; Shubhang Hegde 2-31). **Result:** Gulbarga Mystics won by 6 wkts.

Son of the soil looks to flip Bulls' fortunes

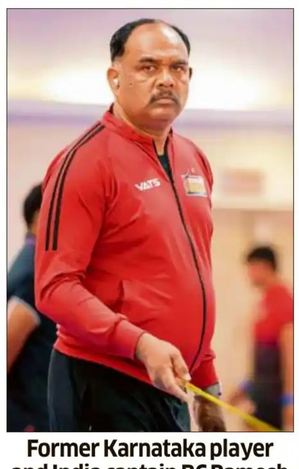
HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The last time the Bengaluru Bulls became the Pro Kabaddi League champions in 2018, BC Ramesh was the assistant coach of the team. Coincidentally, this remains their first and last trophy in the league's 11-year existence.

As Season 12 of PKL approaches, Ramesh, who replaced long-time Bulls' head coach Randhir Singh Sehrawat early this year, hopes to flip the script for the team who finished at the bottom of the 12-team table (with two wins, one draw, 19 losses out of 22 matches) in the last edition.

"It was sad to see that the team became weak, especially over the past 2-3 seasons," Ramesh told *DHoS* during an online interaction.

"The Bulls have a huge fan following who are waiting for the team to become strong again. I'm happy to be back as Bengaluru's coach and take up the responsibility of matching the fans' expectations," said the former Karnataka player and India captain from Channapatna.



Former Karnataka player and India captain BC Ramesh replaced Randhir Singh Sehrawat as Bengaluru Bulls' head coach early this year. PKL MEDIA

In one of the many strategies to rebuild a solid core, Ramesh's emphasis has been on the defence during the lead-up to the upcoming season. This intent became evident the moment Bulls splurged Rs 1.25 crore on Yogesh Dahiya, who became the most expensive Indian defender in PKL auction history.

"Since we have an experienced defensive unit now, they will provide strength to the riders who are fairly young," said Ramesh.

While Yogesh will spearhead the defence from the right corner position, Sanjay Dhull (right cover), Dheeraj (left cover) and Ankush Rathee (left corner) will be expected to support riders Akash Shinde, Aashish Malik, Ganesh B Hanamantagol and the two Iranian's Alireza Mirzeian and Ahmadreza Asgari.

Ramesh, who guided both Bengal Warriors (Season 7, 2019) and Puneri Paltan (Season 10, 2023) to their maiden titles, wants the team to play according to the match situation and not for selfish pursuits.

"Achieveing Super 10s (raider scoring 10 or more points in a match) and High 5s (defender achieving five or more tackle points) is fine, but the interest of the team always comes first. That is the mentality we focussed on instilling during these one-and-a-half months of training camp.

"Because these are boys who have all played for more than 15 years. I can only tweak techniques. But to play as one unit is what will get us the success."

Despite disappointing performances in recent years, the anticipation for Bulls to bulldoze their opponents remains intact. And when the Bengaluru side kicks-off its campaign on the opening day (August 29) against Puneri Paltan in Visakhapatnam, Ramesh and his young team will hope to add to Bulls' silverware of lone runners-up and winners' trophies.

Greco Roman wrestlers disappoint

SAMOKOV (BULGARIA), PTI: India's Greco Roman wrestlers continued to disappoint at the U20 World Championships as all five in action on Saturday exited the competition.

The only Greco Roman wrestler to win a medal at the tournament was Suraj, who pocketed a bronze in the 60kg weight class.

Anil Mor was in bronze race in 55kg weight category but went down fighting 7-10 against Japan's Daisuke Morishita.

With this, India's campaign ended at the Championships.

CHESS With some inspired shows, Indians' presence in elite events is more a rule than an aberration now

Desi flavours the most sought after

MANISHA MOHITE

With three players in the top six in world chess rankings, Indian presence is more than obvious in virtually every event conducted by FIDE (the World Chess Organisation) or any of the prestigious closed-circuit chess tournaments (round robin) akin to the 'Grand Slam' tennis tournaments. Indian players are no longer the outsiders or the aberrations, they are awe inspiring attractors and key players. Freestyle Chess Grand slam or the Grand Chess Tour featuring multiple events are the events every aspiring world champion wants to be featured in.

The entry to these elite events is strictly by invitation, albeit the top-rated players automatically attract invites. Featuring just 10 to 12 players in the main event, these invites are most coveted and organisers use their discretion to extend them to popular prodigies or local talents. Incidentally, Gukesh with a power packed performance (individual gold on top board) at the 2022 Chennai Olympiad and R Praggnanandhaa, courtesy his online victory over Magnus Carlsen - the highest ever rated player on the planet, have been beneficiaries of these invitations.

D Gukesh. FIDE

All- time greats like Carlsen, Viswanathan Anand, Vladimir Kramnik and Garry Kasparov to name a few, have crafted classy chess careers by honing their skills in these tournaments. Valuable experience in playing the elites, mental toughness, developing deeper strategic understanding, adapting to different playing styles and strength are the add-ons or requisites to march towards the world title, not to mention recognition and monetary benefits.

Praggnanandhaa and reigning World Champion D Gukesh are in action at the ongoing Sinquefield Cup in the United State. Pragg incidentally won his first elite event this January, the traditional Tata Steel Masters tournament (previously Corus Chess tournament) in its 87th edition, one which five-time World Champion Anand won on five occasions in his illustrious career.

Anand reveals: "My big break-through was winning the World juniors and getting the GM title almost immediately. I was then invited as a Commentator for the World Cup in Brussels in 1988. It was a big chance for me to meet a lot of bigwigs, especially the Corus organisers who offered me a chance to play there in 1989".

Anand won the tournament jointly on debut and was invited to play the prestigious Reggio Emelia in 1991. The Chennai man won this event, defeating then reigning champion Garry Kasparov to announce his arrival in the big league.

> Playing these events gave me a chance to work on different skill sets. There was a different vibe in playing those tournaments then...
>
>
>
> It was a big chance for me to meet a lot of bigwigs, especially the Corus organisers who offered me a chance to play there in 1989.
>
> **Viswanathan Anand**

"Playing these events gave me a chance to work on different skill sets. There was a different vibe in playing those tournaments then".

Pentala Harikrishna and Krishnan Sasikiran, two of India's best talents after Anand, were the other Indians who received an occasional invite.

Anand adds: "Times have changed a bit. Gukesh got some big invitations in 2024 like the Norway Chess tournament. Pragg got a chance a bit late and now they are almost regulars". The highly talented Vidhit Gujrathi, Aravindh Chithambaram and Nihal Sareen are the other Indians to receive an occasional invite.

Dronacharya Awardee R B Ramesh is quite vocal that the invites to these elite events can boost and shape a player's career. "It is important to make good use of these opportunities and if performance in the first invite exceeds expectations, then it ensures regular invites to future tournaments."

Ramesh minces no words as he adds: "The organisers are from different countries so we cannot claim these spots as our birthrights, we have to perform enough to attract these invites. Previously most top invites would be sent to former USSR or Russia as they boasted of all top players but things have changed now. There will always be exceptions and aberrations with deserving players not getting invites, unfortunately we cannot force organisers to invite"

Arjun Erigaisi, only the second Indian to cross the Elo barrier 2800, confessed: "Last year I didn't get many invitations and it is a bit understandable from the organisers point of view as Pragg and Gukesh were younger than me and had qualified for the Candidates and were better prospects. The shocking part for me is not getting any invites this year, specially as I had crossed the 2800 barrier in January rating list this year. I am trying not to let these things affect me and focus on my game."

R Praggnanandhaa. FIDE

Arjun has been a prolific tournament winner in Open events, clinching most of the events he competes in and will feature in the Grand Swiss event starting in 10 days.

Unfortunately, in this era of equals, events for women have been scarce, and not only in India. Two-time Women's Rapid World Champion Koneru Humpy was only the second women in the history of the game to cross the Elo 2600 barrier after the legendary Judit Polgar. The youngest women in the world then to be awarded the GM title at 15 years of age in 2002, India's golden girl of chess rues: "There were hardly any events for women and in those days, I was very inexperienced and hardly had exposure in playing online. I got a lot of flak and criticism for my mixed results. In fact I didn't have a sponsor for three years even after becoming GM and winning the World Junior girls title at just 14 years, an all- time record. "

Divya Deshmukh. FIDE

Humpy received her first invite, for the Women's North Ural Cup rather late in 2005 but won it comfortably and convincingly ahead of much fancied players like World Champions Antoneata Stefanova and Anna Usheninа. This despite her luggage getting misplaced and arriving only after the second round.

"It was really difficult to play tournaments abroad in those days. After that I don't have any problem getting invitations, as I have maintained top world rankings throughout my career" says Humpy.

Dronavalli Harika and Vaishali Ramesh Babu are the other Indian players who have featured in elite events and also made their presence felt to a certain extent. 19-year-old Divya Deshmukh became the first Indian woman to win the Women's World Cup this year and automatically qualified for the Women's Candidates tournament. This triumph will open up the door of opportunity for Divya and others sooner rather than later! *(Manisha Mohite is a Bengaluru-based chess writer)*

ATHLETICS INTER-STATE

Dhanalakshmi bags third gold

Tushar, Karishma, Deekshita swell Karnataka's medals tally

BENGALURU, DHNS

Dhanalakshmi S, competing in her first major domestic event since her return from a three-year suspension for a doping offence, won the 200m gold at the National Inter-State Athletics Championships in Chennai on Saturday.

Tushar Bhekane

Karishma Sanil

Deekshita Gowda

On a hot comeback trail, sprinter Dhanalakshmi S won her third gold medal on Day 4 of the National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships in Chennai on Saturday.

Meanwhile, 800m runner Tushar Behkane won Karnataka's third silver at the event after his statemates -- javelin thrower Karishma Sanil and 400m hurdler Deekshita Gowda -- won bronze to take state's medal tally to seven.

For the Tamil Nadu sprinter Dhanalakshmi, this is her first major domestic event since her return from a three-year doping ban. She was the second fastest runner in the country at the time, behind Dutee Chand, who is also serving a four-year doping ban since 2023.

Dhanalakshmi, who returned with a 100m gold medal at the Indian Open in Sangrur last July, won the 200m final with a timing of 23.53 seconds. She earlier won the 100m dash and then led her state's charge in the women's 4x100m relay.

Karnataka tally surges

After Karnataka added their first gold medal of the competition late on Day 3 through the mixed 4x400m relay success, 400m hurdler Deekshita won the unlikely bronze with a timing of 1:00.09 seconds after race favourite Vithya Ramraj pulled out due to an injury.

Meanwhile, javelin thrower Karishma took bronze with an effort of 51.30m in an event perennially dominated by Annu Rani. The national record holder threw 61.05m to take the gold but fell short of the World Athletics Championships' direct qualification mark of 64m.

Rani, however, is all set to earn the invitation for the event, slated in Tokyo next month, from World Athletics through a quota system for World Rankings. Before the event, she was ranked 29th (after point calculation of her top five performances), while 61.05m was her third-best attempt of the season. In total, 36 berths are to be filled, making her 29th spot feasible for the invitation with her Chennai performance likely to improve her ranking.

Elites flop

However, it's worth noting that none of the Indian athletes has so far breached the direct qualification mark, with just a day left in the meet and also the deadline for breaching the cut-off marks. This included a poor show by long jump prodigy Shaili Singh, who could only manage a 6.16m jump to finish third while the qualifying mark was 6.86. She was ranked 64th in the World Rankings before heading to Chennai.

India's shot put king Tajinderpal Singh Toor had a poor outing too, as the national record holder settled for silver with an attempt of 19.41m behind Samardeep Singh Gill (19.82). They were far from Tokyo's mark of 21.50m, and their poor rankings are not helping the case for the alternate route either.

Result: Men: 200m: Animesh Kujur (Odi) 20.63s (NMR; Old: 20.65, Animesh, 2024) 1; Ragul Kumar (TN) 20.92, 2; Amlan Borgohain (Asm) 21.19, 3.
800m: Krishan Kumar (Har) 1:48.41, 1; Tushar Bhekane (Kar) 1:48.82, 2; Prakash Gadade (Mah) 1:48.86, 3.
400m hurdles: Ruchit Mori (Guj) 49.76s, 1; Subhas Das (WB) 50.61, 2; Hardeep (Pun) 51.03, 3.
High jump: Sarvesh Kushare (Mah) 2.24m, 1; Aadarsh Ram (TN) 2.21, 2; Swadin Majhi (Odi) 2.18, 3. **Shot put:** Samardeep Gill (MP) 19.82m, 1; Tajinderpal Singh Toor (Pun) 19.41, 2; Aniket (Utk) 18.09, 3.

Women: 200m: S Dhanalakshmi (TN) 23.53s, 1; Shivani Saini (UP) 24.04, 2; Sakshi Chavan (Guj) 24.05, 3. **400m hurdles:** Ramandeep Kaur (Pun) 58.90s, 1; Olimba Steffi (TN) 59.21, 2; Deekshita Gowda (Kar) 1:00.09, 3. **800m:** Pooja (Har) 2.02.27, 1; Huidrom Devi (Man) 2.04.44, 2; Thota Sankeertana (Cht) 2:04.56, 3. **Javelin throw:** Annu Rani (UP) 61.05m, 1; Deepika (Har) 57.19, 2; Karishma Sanil (Kar) 51.30, 3.
Discus throw: Seema (Har) 57.18m, 1; Bhavana Yadav (Del) 51.61, 2; Priya (Har) 48.96, 3. **Long jump:** Moumita Mondal (WB) 6.27m, 1; Shaili Sing (UP) 6.18, 2; Sherin A (TN) 6.16, 3

CHAMPION TEAMS

TOP: Silicon City Academy of Secondary Education Girls' team (grade 10 and below), winners of the Deccan Cup basketball tournament conducted by the Deccan International School in Bengaluru on Saturday. STANDING (from left): Varun - Head of Sports Deccan, K N Tilak Kumar, Chairman - Deccan International School, Ningappa, Hiranmayi, Mishika, Spoorthi, Diya, Druthi, Usha Devi (Principal). KNEELING: Shreya, Jisha, Purvaja, Medha, Chinmayi and Tamanna.

Deccan International School team won the Deccan Cup basketball event in the boys' category (grade 10 and below). STANDING (from left): Nishith, Vivaan, Aryan, Amrith, Jayanth, Vyomdev, Hitin, Somashekar (Coach), Anirudh. KNEELING: Mayur, Shreyas, Dhanush, Karthik, Shashank.

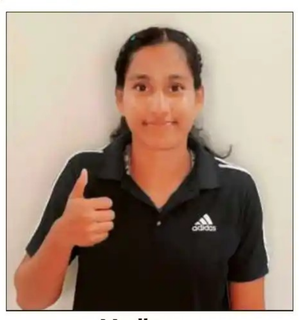
Pride's Prince fancied for feature

PUNE SELECTIONS

Pride's Prince, from the stables of Imtiaz Sait and to be ridden by Antony Raj S, is fancied to win the Dr S R Captain Salver, the feature event of the races to be run over a mile on Sunday. The first race starts at 1:25 pm.
1. So Perfect Plate - 1400M: Crystal Clear 1, Bohemian Rhapsody 2, Baleno 3.
2. Act in Time Plate - 1000M: Midnight Express 1, Western Star 2, Goddess Of Dawn 3.
3. Capitulate Plate - 2000M: Doctor Dolly 1, Superstar 2, Eaton Square 3.
4. Pune Times Mirror Trophy - 1200M: Wing Of Fury 1, Conjurer 2, All For Love 3.
5. Nana Raghunath Salver - 1600M: Don Julio 1, Gunsmoke 2, Kings Gambit 3.
6. Dr. S. R. Captain Salver - 1600M: Pride's Prince 1, Ultimo 2, Singer Sargent 3.
7. Spark Of Gold Plate - 1200M: Zendaya 1, Mila 2, Surrealist 3.
Day's best: Don Julio.
Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 , 7. **Treble**: 4, 5, 6.

Records galore at inter-district athletics

BENGALURU, DHNS



Madhurya

As many as 10 meet records were set on the opening day of the Karnataka State Inter-District Junior and U-23 Athletics at the Mahatma Gandhi Stadium in Udupi on Saturday.

Four of the records were broken, each in the U-23 (all men) and U-20 events (two each for boys and girls). U-18 sections saw one record each in boys' and girls' categories while the U-16 event saw one.

Belgaum's Vaishnavi Rawal's 2:12.42 effort in the women's U-20 800m final stood out as she obliterated the 30-year-old mark by Feme Thomas (2:13.80 in 1995).

Udupi's Madhurya impressed in U-20 girls', winning two gold medals in shot put and discus throw with efforts of 11.15m and 43.50m respectively. The latter also became the new meet mark, surpassing Priyanka JS' 41.93 from 2014.

Result: U-23 winners: Men: 10000m: Onkar (Beng) 29:49.04 (NMR; Old: 32:17.0); **Long Jump:** Sunal S Suvarna (Udp) 6.93m; **800m:** Sangamesh Annappa (Dwd) 1:56.23; **High Jump:** Sudeep (Smg) 2.08m (NMR; Old: 2.05); **Javelin Throw:** Yuvaraj Lamani (Bgk) 56.22m; **100m:** Prasannakumar (Dwd) 10.52s (NMR; Old: 10.55)
Women: 10000m: Pranamya N (DK) 40:35.09; **800m:** Rekha Basappa Piroji (DK) 2:15.36; **Shot Put:** Akanksha (Udp) 10.68m; **Discus Throw:** Pragya Goyal (Beng) 27.71m; **100m:** Neole Anna Cornelio (Beng) 12.03
U-20 winners: Men: 10000m: Akhil (Rmg) 32:33.10; **Long Jump:** Noyel (DK) 7.00m; **800m:** Kalyan Jr (Beng) 1:51.83 (NMR; Old: 1:52.45); **High Jump:** Abhay (Beng) 1.96m; **Javelin Throw:** Kalloleppa (Bel) 70.21m (NMR; Old: 66.82); **100m:** Prateek D (Beng) 10.88
Women: 3000m: Nandini G (Udp) 10:46.35; **Shot Put:** Madhurya (Udp) 11.15m; **Discus Throw:** Madhurya (Udp) 43.50m (NMR; Old: 41.93 m); **800m:** Vaishnavi Rawal (Bgv) 2:12.42 (NMR; Old: 2:13.8); **100m:** Sthuthi P Shetty (Udp) 12.06
U-18 winners: Boys: Discus Throw: Avinash (Vjp) 44.84m; **High Jump:** Rohith Kumar (Udp) 1.83m; **1000m:** Pratham HD (Chk) 2:26.76 (NMR; Old: 2:31.23); **100m:** Chiranth (Mys) 10.61
Girls: Discus Throw: Shrimayi Kulkarni (Beng) 39.65m; **1000m:** Nagini Nayak (DK) 2:51.52 (NMR; Old: 2:57.0); **100m:** Suchithra S (Beng) 12.15
U-16 winners: Boys: High Jump: Rakesh Adhithya (Beng) 1.66m; **80m hurdles:** Dnynadev (DK) 10.99s (NMR; Old: 11.1), **Shot Put:** Amogh (Mys) 13.64m; **600m:** Sharath K J (Svm) 1:23.89
Girls: Javelin Throw: Prekshitha SRR (DK) 31.86m; **600m:** Shamathmika (Beng) 1:33.69
U-14 winners: Boys: Triathlon C: Sandeep Y (Dwd) 1978
Girls: Triathlon C: Mega Ashok Pujari S (DK) 2288

Praggu, Gukesh battle to secure draw in fifth round

ST. LOUIS (USA), PTI: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa (**in pic**) played out an easy and quick draw with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave while World champion D Gukesh survived anxious moments before splitting the point with Duda Jan-Krzysztof in the fifth round of the Sinquefield Cup here.

On a day when all five games were drawn, Fabiano Caruana of the United States maintained his sole lead on 3.5 points after signing peace with compatriot Wesley So.

USA's Samuel Sevian continued with his solid performance and drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan while compatriot Levon Aronian drew with Frenchman Alireza Firouzja.

Post the halfway stage in this nine-round event, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour, Caruana is followed by Praggnanandhaa and Aronian and a pack of five players — Gukesh, Firouzja, Wesley, Sevian and Vachier-Lagrave — share the fourth spot with 2.5 points apiece.

Not far behind is Duda on two points, and still at the bottom is Abdusattorov on one point. Praggnanandhaa had to do little with his black pieces as the Rossolimo Sicilian by Vachier-Lagrave presented zero troubles.

After some routine theory, the players reached a middle game wherein the Frenchman decided against taking any risks and decided to go for a repetition to draw in a mere 26 moves.

Results (Round 5): Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 2.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Duda Jan-Krzysztof (Pol, 2) drew with D Gukesh (Ind, 2.5); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 3.5) drew with Wesley So (USA, 2.5); Samuel Savian (USA) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 1); Levon Aronian (USA, 3); drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 2.5).

Lashka tipped to clinch Governor's Cup

HYDERABAD SELECTIONS

Lashka, trained by Vittal Deshmukh and ridden by BR Kumar, is fancied to win the Governor's Cup, the feature event of the races to be run over a sprint on Sunday.
The first race starts at 12:05 pm.
1. Bhupalpally Plate (Div I) - 1400M: Perception 1, Catch The Worm 2, Exclusive Luck 3.
2. Silver Phantom Plate - 1600M: Whistledown 1, Pride Aside 2, Honey Luna 3.
3. Bhupalpally Plate (Div II) - 1400M: Divine Secret 1, Smart Boy 2, Secret Option 3.
4. Hill Fort Plate (Div I) - 1200M: Most Beautiful 1, Natu Natu 2, Dali's Champion 3.
5. B Marideshwara Rao Memorial Cup - 1200M: Warwick 1, Glorious Power 2, Star Forever 3.
6. Northern Dancer Plate - 1400: Noble Heart 1, N R I Ultrapower 2, N R I Sport 3.
7. Governor's Cup - 1200M: Lashka 1, Miss Maya 2, Imperia 3.
8. Salar Jung Cup - 1200M: Dubai Touch 1, Pacific Heights 2, High Heels 3.
9. Hill Fort Plate (Div II) - 1200M: Safala 1, Flashing Memories 2, Ilene 3.
Day's best: Most Beautiful.
I Jackpot: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
II Jackpot: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.
I treble: 2, 3, 4.
II treble: 4, 5, 6.
III treble: 7, 8, 9.

THE Z FACTOR

The economic malaise of the new-age strongman

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At the turn of this century, a wave of economic optimism and cultural exchange led to a proliferation of democracy around the world. With the fall of Soviet communism, these trends led some scholars to pronounce the "end of history"—countries, they argued, will no longer need to experiment with different ways of life because Western liberal democracy has won.

But in an age of chaos wrought by emerging technology—from social media to Artificial Intelligence—people are losing faith in their own selves as voters. In a 2023 survey by the Pew Research Centre, a median of 31% across 24 countries said that the rule by a strong leader or the military would be a good way to govern their countries. India clocked the highest support for authoritarianism at a startling 85%. Middle-income countries were seen as favouring authoritarianism more than high-income countries (the US reported 32% support, the UK 37%, and Germany 17%). Strikingly, people with lower incomes were found to be more supportive of authoritarian rule than wealthier individuals.

Ironically, driven by this widespread scepticism among voters, democracy itself has facilitated a global decline in democracy. Following the election of a wave of anti-establishment populists around the world, indices have been registering steady declines in the quality of liberal democracy across countries.

In 2024, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)'s Democracy Index fell to an all-time low. The EIU Index stood at 5.17 (on a 0-10 scale); 130 countries of the 167 covered by the index either registered a decline in their score or made no improvement. Authoritarian rule covered 39.2% of the world population and 60 countries are now classified as authoritarian regimes—in 2014, the number was 52.

Why do voters love authoritarian leaders? In some countries, particularly in Asia, a part of the allure stems from the memory of strongmen leaders in China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore who brought rapid growth to their countries from the 1980s to the 2000s, often outstripping their democratic peers.

But this phenomenon of strongman-fuelled growth occurred at a time when global leaders had bought into the idea that prosperity comes to those who trade and open up. As a result, although the masses had grown to distrust foreigners after years of colonial exploitation, leaders in each of those countries were able to use their low economic base and relatively costless labour to export goods to the rest of the world.

In the West, these trends had the opposite effect: As factories moved to Asia, labourers in those countries blamed democracy, which they felt had been co-opted by the educated elite who had shipped off their jobs abroad and then allowed in foreigners to compete with them. The solution: kick out the immigrants and throw out the imported goods.

Today, as the mood shifts towards scepticism and mistrust between countries, strongmen leaders are no longer encouraging trade or global business. Powered by voters who increasingly demand that they fight liberal institutions and ignore their laws, the new-age strongmen have taken their countries to war, imposed arbitrary policy changes, and begun conflicts over tribe and religion.

The result is stark. According to Morgan Stanley, in 2025, the global economy will see the slowest rate of growth since the pandemic. The World Bank warns that if current forecasts hold, this decade will see the slowest growth of any decade since the 1960s.

The problem here is uncertainty. With pandemics and natural disasters, people generally see light at the end of the tunnel: whether it takes a week, a month or even a year, the flood, the drought, and the disease will eventually end. But with unpredictability induced by these strongmen, no one knows when the chaos will end – if at all.

Frustration over lost jobs, growth, and economic opportunities could cause a reckoning one way or the other. If voters direct their anger at democratic institutions – and blame them for paralysing the strongman leader – they could double down on support for the leader. In that sense, despite failing to deliver any useful gains, the leader may only grow in popularity. But if voters see that fast-paced and chaotic governance is counterproductive, they may turn on the leader and restore normalcy.

POORVA PAKSHA

The times they are a-changin'

Come gather 'round people/ Wherever you roam/ And admit that the waters/ Around you have grown/ And accept it that soon/ You'll be drenched to the bone

Before I dive into Dylan's flood, let me re-explain poorva paksha. It's an ancient Indian philosophical practice of steel-manning rival views with empathy. I've long urged readers to weave this wisdom from ancient literature into their daily lives as a hack to cut through the turbulent waters of our divisive times. We, the public, must tackle this ourselves. We cannot trust governments to do it. With India's IT Act revisions, for example, we rely on the government to tame fake news, deep fakes, and false memes. But governments favour their own interests, silencing dissent. Free speech, tied to thought, is too vital to risk. We don't want state control over our minds.

Come writers and critics/ Who prophesise with your pen/ And keep your eyes wide/ The chance won't come again/ And don't speak too soon/ For the wheel's still in spin

I'm hooked on ancient literature, whether Indian philosophy or from farther afield. Now, it's Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*. This erstwhile Roman Emperor's opening lines hit hard. From Diognetus, he writes, he learned to shun the colosseum's roar. Don't cheer the swift, small-shielded gladiators or the steady, large-shielded ones. See both clearly, sans bloodlust. This echoes poorva paksha perfectly. Digital storms spin lies faster than a wheel. Memes ignite battles. But Aurelius urges calm, impartial thinking to navigate the noise.

Come senators, congressmen/ Please heed the call/ Don't stand in the doorway/ Don't block up the hall

Speaking of senators, a viral post about Barack Obama last week claimed that a Zoom call with Texas Democrats showed a bowl behind him bearing a blue spiral triangle, an FBI-flagged pedophile symbol: the 'BoyLover' logo. With Epstein's shadow lingering, suspicions of elite misdeeds run high. Yet HypeFresh, a fact-checking service, has debunked it. Still, the claim tore through X, dividing people viciously.

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Heed Aurelius' call: don't rush to judgement. Governments pounce on such haste, vowing to curb lies. India's IT Act amendments allow a government unit to label content as 'fake'. Platforms must delete it within 36 hours. In 2024, the Supreme Court paused a challenge to these rules. Meanwhile, a draft Digital India Act targets AI-driven lies. The EU's 2024 Digital Services Act fines platforms up to 6% of revenue for 'harmful' content. All these laws risk stifling satire and dissent, enforcing conformity and approved narratives.

The curse it is cast/ The slow one now/ Will later be fast/ As the present now/ Will later be past

Lies race like gladiators lunging for the kill. The Obama meme recalls 2016's Pizzagate, twisting symbols. The FBI's bulletin is real but misused – no proof links Obama's bowl to the crime. Some among us see every backdrop as a coded signal. Slow down. Feel the accusers' fear of hidden elites, the defenders' weariness of lies. At JNU, years ago, I urged students to hold rival ideas close, not strike them down. That classroom was a sanctuary. But as Dylan precociously prophesied in his 1964 anthem, the times they are changin'. Today's digital arena isn't a sanctuary – it's a colosseum. India's IT Rules seek to serve as referee, but for many they only fuel fears for press freedom, threatening journalists. The DSA drives platforms to over-censor, sacrificing lawful speech just to avoid fines. Governments wield blunt clubs. But our empathy and reason can carve a sharper path.

Come mothers and fathers/ Throughout the land/ And don't criticise/ What you can't understand

Ever paused before sharing a post, its pull strong but its truth murky? The Obama meme, like the earlier myth that he threw $65,000 hotdog parties, prey on that itch. These are QAnon tales – like the 2017 debunked pedophile ring, or the 2023 fake 'minor-attracted persons' tweet. India's IT Act and the DSA aim to tame such lies, but they also choke speech. India's vaguely-worded IT rules already face court battles for targeting fair political critique. The DSA's 'trusted flaggers' policy pushes platforms to cut humour or politics to toe the line. The fix must be ours: pause, verify, weigh the algo's interests and the platform pressures. Do you think governments can sort truth without harm?

In 2025, Dylan's flood waters surge. Hearken back to Aurelius: don't cheer one side's win, but view the fight from beyond the fight. India's IT Act and the EU's DSA do indeed battle lies, but not without risking so many colourful, dissenting voices. Only our empathy and reason, sharpened by poorva paksha, steer through the meme-fuelled flood, preserving truth along with freedom.

SANS THE SACRED

Praise sways them all

With ChatGPT 5.0 now out, I have read it all – from people using AI as therapist, to deluding themselves that they discovered a new mathematical theory thanks to talking to AI, to getting divorced because their spouse was unhealthily obsessed with it. Most of these troubles happen because these LLMs are optimised to enhance user engagement, which makes them sycophantic and very likely to make the people talking to them feel good about themselves. How? By agreeing with them and then drawing them deeper into the delusions of their own making. The problem is, as Ashvatthama puts it in the Mahabharata – "Each of us thinks of ourselves as cleverer than the others." So, when we have someone telling us that we are extraordinary, we are inclined to believe them. In fact, it feels like betrayal when the sane ones are telling us otherwise. We are more likely to run back to who or what flattered us in the first place.

This reminds me (but of course) of the story of the sage Narada. Often in the puranas as the devout celibate who enjoys himself by instigating fights across the universe, he sometimes unwittingly gets trapped in very worldly entanglements. The *Shiva Purana* tells us of a time when Narada performed such great penance that no one was able to disturb him. Indra, fearing that his own position would be usurped, promptly dispatched Kama, the god of love, to entice Narada with sensual pleasures in all of the usual ways, but none of these tactics worked. Why? Ironically, because it was at this very spot that Shiva had earlier burnt Kama to ashes for daring to disturb him.

But how was Narada to know that? Narada, who did not fall prey to desire, fell prey to arrogance. He completed his penance and went straight to Kailasa, to boast to none other than Shiva, that Shiva was no longer the sole victor over Kama. Shiva was very kind, but also warned him, "This is all very well, but please do not show off about your conquest of Kama before others, especially before Vishnu." Now Narada was slightly miffed. Perhaps Shiva was just jealous that Narada would now be considered on par with him. Why, indeed, should he not tell others about his accomplishments? Off he went to Vaikuntha to share the wonderful news with Vishnu. Vishnu just smiled and praised Narada to the skies – "You are the most accomplished, most devout, the greatest celibate. Desire stands no chance when it encounters you."

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A while later, Narada happened to pass by a beautiful kingdom ruled by King Shilanidhi, and met the princess Srimati, with whom he was instantly smitten. On hearing that her *swayamvara* was to happen soon, he decided that he must win her. One problem remained. How to make sure he looked handsome? He went back to his trusty Vishnu. "I must marry this woman. Please make sure that when she casts a glance on me, Hari, I look like you." In the throes of passion, Narada did not realise that in Sanskrit, Hari not only means Vishnu, but also means a monkey. He happily went to the *swayamvara*, only to get rejected. To add insult to injury, Vishnu himself attended the *swayamvara* and of course, the princess chose him.

The infuriated Narada cursed Vishnu to miserably pine after a woman just as he caused Narada to do, and to take the help of monkeys to get her back. The curse was fulfilled when Vishnu became Rama, but that is a whole other story.

This is all very well, you may say, but Narada is so learned himself. Did he really not realise Hari could mean a monkey? And didn't he think Vishnu's praise was a bit too much? Well, I would say – How do you expect poor Narada to see God's own flattery when we can't even see through GPT?

ABROAD AT HOME

Decoding Trump's tariff tantrums

Last month, I wrote here about India's splendid diplomatic isolation, but my prediction became fact sooner than I expected, with President Trump's withering attacks on India. Biden drove Russia into China's arms over Ukraine; Trump seems intent on driving India into China's arms; and Ukraine isn't even Asia's problem, but a likely Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be.

There are at least four different ways in which one could rationalise the Trump position: 1. A negotiating opening gambit to soften up India 2. Frustration from the lack of leverage against Presidents Putin and Xi 3. Part of a regime-change operation planned by the Deep State and 4. A desire to force manufacturing and investment to move back to the US. I hope it is a combination of 1 and 2, and that better sense will prevail before a mutually-beneficial Indo-US relationship is damaged beyond repair. However, there is a non-trivial chance that, with prompting by Britain's Whitehall (which created Pakistan in the first place to keep India in check), the US Deep State has decided to target India.

I wrote a couple of years ago that the Deep State, intimidated by China's rise, might accept a condominium with it, giving each a sphere of influence. China gets Asia and the Indian Ocean; the US gets the Americas, Europe and the Atlantic; and they share the Pacific. India, Japan, Australia (i.e. the Quad), and ASEAN become Chinese vassals. So like the Vatican-brokered Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 that divided the world between Spain and Portugal!

There is also the anti-Thucydides Trap, wherein the incumbent power (the US), instead of resisting the rise of the challenger (China), helped it grow, deluding themselves that China would be benign. However, both are now employing all possible means against new challenger India's rise, including trying to balkanise the latter.

That is Scenario 3, the Deep State playbook of 'colour revolutions' against governments they don't like for whatever reason. There is context in the BJP's 2024 accusation that the US Deep State is trying to "destabilise" India and that efforts by the Opposition are aiding this larger scheme.

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RajeevSrinivasa

Scenario 4 makes a strange sort of sense. Trump realises the US erred badly in relinquishing manufacturing to China, and wants to pull it back; also he has no interest in India becoming a new manufacturing power. Similarly, the 'deals' forcing Japan, the EU, Korea et al to invest billions of dollars in the US (and Ukraine, which receives extensive international aid, has promised to spend $100 billion in the US) are extortionary: a sort of neo-imperialism.

The effort to browbeat India into buying more US weapons is part of this: Trump aide Peter Navarro grumbled that India buys 36% of its armaments from Russia. He omitted to mention that this is down from 70+% a decade ago. Sadly, US armaments and aerospace products (e.g. the F-35 and Boeing 787) are now seen as not so reliable.

The moral posturing about India's purchases of Russian oil leading to Ukrainians' deaths is bizarre. It's just business, Trump aide Scott Bessent, why repeat INDI's Ambani-Adani mantra? Remember your own 'robber barons' and "What's good for General Motors is good for America"? There are many examples of profit above morals.

One is the 1973 oil price crisis, when OPEC suddenly quadrupled crude oil prices, forcing a massive transfer of wealth from developing countries, quite likely causing starvation deaths. The US could have persuaded (or bullied) OPEC into preventing the price rise. But it didn't. Why? Because those petro-dollars were recycled into buying American weapons. The Military Industrial Complex prospered. No morality there.

There is an earlier parallel. Tipu Sultan invaded Kerala in the 1780s with a reign of terror. The British did nothing, despite a treaty with Travancore. After Tipu amassed all the looted treasure, the British killed him, and stole all of it themselves. They came out smelling of roses, and they had the loot. Two birds, one stone. No morality there, either.

Given all this, there's one thing India needs to do urgently: gain leverage, a bargaining chip. China has rare earths, OPEC has oil. India should use the 100,000 H1-B folks who are likely to be forced out from the US to gain leverage through first-class software products.

THIS AND THAT

The tangled musical lives of a bohemian and a recluse

S R Ramakrishna
often sees high art in kitsch and vice versa

Books and articles about Indian musicians tend towards excessive praise, often portraying them as gandharvas (demigods) taking on human form and gracing the earth with their presence. In a conversation described in the book *Annapurna Devi: The Untold Story of a Reclusive Genius*, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, the sarod maestro second only to Pandit Ravi Shankar in taking Indian raga music to Western audiences, brings down such assumptions to the ground with a thud. If you love music, he says, don't get too close to musicians, or you will be disillusioned.

It is no secret that the path of Indian music is long, arduous, and more often than not, frustrating. The story of Annapurna Devi (1927-2018) and Pandit Ravishankar, the sitar maestro to whom she was married for some years, found its way into Hindi cinema when Hrishikesh Mukherjee made *Abhimaan* (1973), starring Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bhaduri. It is a thinly veiled story of a musician-couple and the path of envy and heartbreak that it takes. The Marathi film *Disciple*, directed by Chaitanya Tamhane, also has its ear close to the ground when it delves into the world of classical musicians and their formidable pursuits.

Annapurna Devi was the daughter of Ustad Allauddin Khan (1862-1972), the saintly musician who played multiple instruments, taught music to a maharaja. He traced his lineage to Mian Tansen, and his music in turn shaped some of the greatest of Indian musicians who won worldwide admirers in the era of gramophone records. Some clandestine recordings of Annapurna Devi's surbahar playing exist, but no commercial recording is available to this day.

The revered Allauddin Khan had a routine that included walking up a hill in the morning to offer prayers to the Hindu goddess Sharada, imparting lessons to instrumentalists and vocalists through the day, and performing *namaz* in the evening.

Even as a young girl, Annapurna Devi had acquired a reputation for excellence that matched and excelled Ravishankar's. The book traces Ravishankar's jitters to an incident in their early youth. Brijnathsinghji, maharaja of Maihar in Uttar Pradesh, invites her over to perform the surbahar, a bigger version of the sitar. Ravishankar insists he wants to play the instrument after she is done. It is already dinner time, and the maharaja walks away midway.

When the marriage is on the rocks, the book says, Annapurna Devi takes a vow that she will never perform in public again. It is a sacrifice she willingly undertakes in a bid to save the marriage, but too many forces are at play, and it isn't long before they reach a point of no return. She sticks to her vow till the very end, even after a painful battle for the custody of their son Shubho, and a divorce.

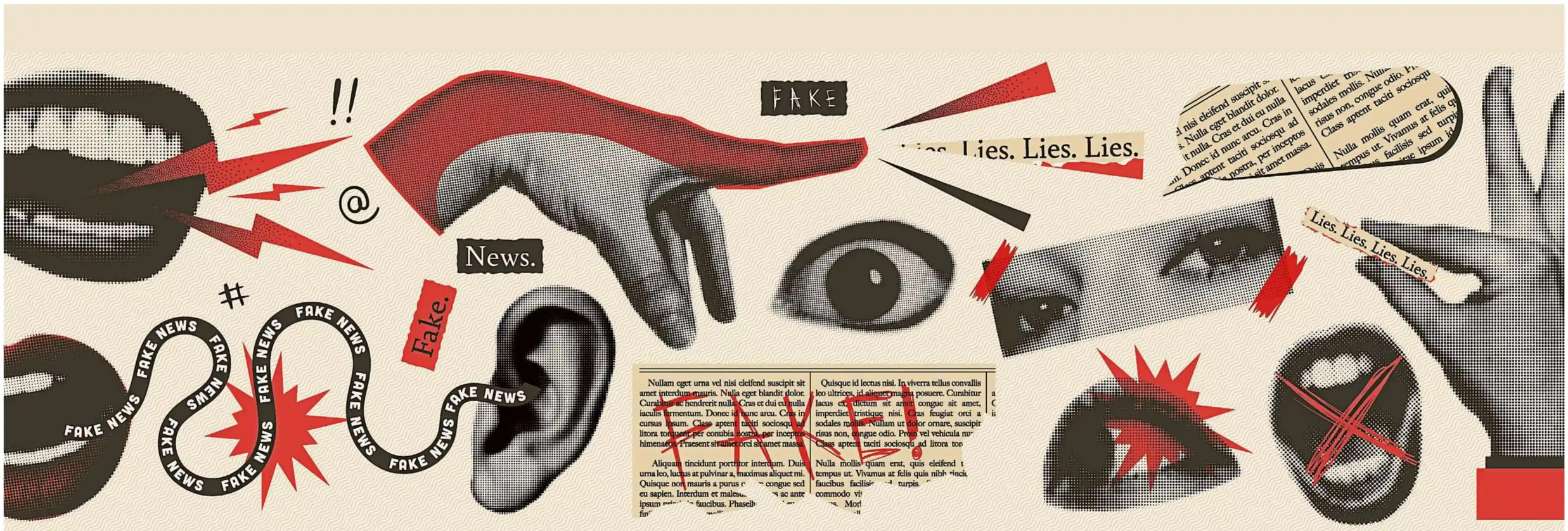
The book is studded with incredible stories that tell of the monastic resolve of Annapurna Devi. When she is under pressure from Indira Gandhi, then the prime minister, to perform for George Harrison of The Beatles and Yehudi Menuhin, she refuses as always, and eventually makes a small concession – they are welcome to sit outside her door and listen to her practise in the wee hours of the morning.

Atul Merchant Jataayu, author of the book, was part of a small, select group of students she mentored with affection. They are put through the hard rigours of classical music at her flat in Mumbai. Saturdays are reserved for casual banter and laughter. The book is based on anecdotes recounted at the Saturday sessions, and also what her close associates saw unfolding before their own eyes.

Annapurna Devi: The Untold Story of a Reclusive Genius (Penguin) is a gripping chronicle of her troubled life and times. It also tracks how she persevered, pushing away blank cheques with contempt, to rise to heights never scaled before. Ravishankar had narrated his side of the story in *Raga Mala*, his lushly illustrated and richly produced autobiography published in 1997. This book is sometimes a counter to present the story from her perspective. An excellent Kannada translation by Sandhya Rani is coming up soon.

Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, who wrote the preface for the book, is a celebrity-student Annapurna Devi praised and snubbed in equal measure. Once, back from a tour abroad, he proudly hands her an expensive clock, extolling its virtues. She flings it out of the window.

The story of Ravishankar, the virtuoso who dazzled the world with his solos and collaborations (*West Meets East* with Yehudi Menuhin is among his most magnificent recordings), and Annapurna Devi, who worked in severe isolation on her austere music, is way more dramatic than a Greek tragedy. It features two exalted heroes, one bohemian and the other rishi-like, and serves as a complex parable on art, life, healing and redemption.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Lies we live by

From white lies to Instagram fakes, we regularly conceal, deceive, and perform. But each lie takes a toll — leading to stress, broken trust and warped identity. Truth, though more difficult in this age of social media validation and digital personas, frees us from exhausting facades, writes Juliana Lazarus

When deception helps...

Sometimes, deception works and can help the human body heal. In 1944, Harvard professor and anaesthesiologist Henry Beecher was treating Allied troops in Anzio, Italy, when they brought in an injured soldier. He desperately needed an operation, but Beecher did not have any morphine.

A frantic nurse resorted to injecting the soldier with diluted salt water, telling him it was morphine. And, guess what? It worked! The soldier went through the operation, mostly calm. Thus was born the phenomenon called the placebo effect — when you believe that you're receiving treatment that's as effective as the real deal.

Numbers don't lie

Nearly 50% of Gen Zers (born 1997–2012) said they lied on job applications, outpacing older generations, according to a survey by career.io. The survey showed 47% of Gen Zers put down details to align with expectations, compared to 38.5% of millennials, 20.4% of Gen X, and 9.4% of Baby Boomers. Here's what they lied about: job responsibilities (28.38%), work experience (22.97%), and job titles (17.57%), with some lying in multiple areas.

The earliest polygraph tests

A lie can lead to increased heart rate, a dry mouth, excessive sweating, a shaky voice ... some of which form the basis of the once-popular lie-detector or polygraph test. But the ancients had their own devices:

Ancient China: A thief or a liar was apparently made to chew dry rice while being questioned. They were then asked to spit out the rice. If any grains were sticking to the tongue, it was a sign of guilt. The ancients believed that the stress of lying would slow down saliva flow, leading to a dry mouth.

Ancient India: In 500 BC, priests, the story goes, would make thieves go through the 'donkey tail test'. They would cover the tails of donkeys with soot and put them in dark tents or caves along with the suspected thieves. The suspect's task? Pull the tail of the donkey. If the donkey brayed, the thief was guilty. And if he left the tent with soot-free hands, the priests would know he had not pulled the donkey's tail for fear of being revealed as a thief. Heads, you lose; tails, you lose!

SOURCE: WWW.ANCIENT-ORIGINS.NET

It was peak Covid time in New Delhi in 2020. And Sandeep (*name changed*) was holed up in his studio. The pay cheques had stopped coming, and soon, even one meal a day seemed an uncertainty. As he was scrolling his Instagram account listlessly, a lifeline popped up. 'Need a meal? Reach out,' read a friend's post. Sandeep called, but the phone just rang and rang and rang ... Sandeep later found out that it was just a post, intended only to impress.

Lying to impress, lying to wriggle out of a sticky situation, lying to protect, to prove a point, for better prospects, to avoid work and hurting people .... there are many reasons why we lie. And although it's been drummed into us since childhood that lying is bad, we don't stop. Will there be consequences, apart from your innards getting roasted in the netherworlds after death or cooling your heels behind bars if the lie is huge or err...being caught on camera during Chris Martin's jumbotron? Well, that depends.

According to Sreedhar Mandyam, founder-director of Darwin Psychological Centre, Mysuru, there are different kinds of lies. "Mostly, it is to protect ourselves or to protect others. For instance, one may not want to stress one's parents by telling them the entire truth of what is happening in the office and how there is a likelihood of getting laid off."

However, chronic lying is different, he adds. "Like a college student who habitually bunks classes and who is constantly lying to his/her parents and teachers. This can have disastrous consequences and will eventually come to light. The guilt and fear of being caught put tremendous pressure on them. It also builds stress in relationships."

Intrinsic trait?

In his book, 'Born Liars', Ian Leslie says that lying is intrinsic to us. We learn to deceive and survive in groups and society at large. He offers the example of a nine-month-old baby faking laughter to be one with other giggling babies.

Even primates fake it, researchers Richard Byrne and Andrew Whiten discovered in the 1980s. They observed two young chimpanzees digging for food. However, when they noticed an older chimp nearing, they stopped digging, quickly sat back, scratched their heads (!) and behaved as if nothing was going on. Once the elder was out of sight, they immediately got back to digging.

This kind of deceit requires intelligence, and our brain is forced to work overtime. That's why Sam Harris calls lying an energy thief in his book, 'Lying'.

Priyanka N (*name changed*) should know. She narrates: "I used to work in Dubai, and when I would come to India for my vacation, I would want to meet as many friends as I could, close and not so close. However, this left me exhausted. So, I learnt to be selective about whom I would meet, and I would happily dish out excuses and untruths to the rest to avoid meeting them. While it worked in the beginning, it soon began to take a toll on me... I would forget which lie I had told to whom, and my mind would be in a tangle."

Physical and mental impact

As Harris says, it takes a considerable amount of mental effort to lie and to maintain the facade. To maintain one lie,

> Lying is intrinsic to us. We learn to deceive and survive in groups. In an experiment it was seen that even a nine-month-old baby faked laughter to be one with other giggling babies.

we end up telling more. Then there's the worry that friends and colleagues are exchanging wildly different versions of a single thing. Result: A whole lot of unwanted stress and anxiety. At the other end, truth needs no monitoring.

The fear of being cross-questioned results in a fight-or-flight response, leading to the production of cortisol and adrenaline, hormones associated with stress and fear. The repeated release of stress hormones during deception can have long-term effects on a person's emotional well-being, leading to issues like anxiety, depression and even physical health problems — remember Marta Cabrera (Ana de Armas) in '*Knives Out*' (Netflix/2019) who pukes every time she lies?

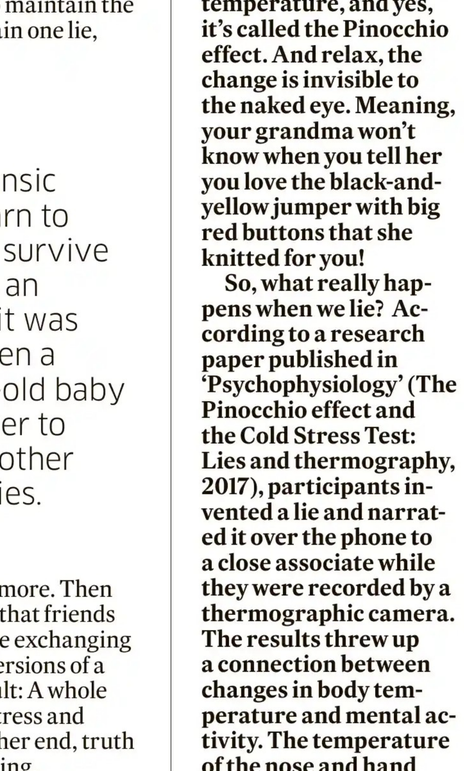
In fact, a Notre Dame research project in 2012 on the effects of pathological lying studied 110 volunteers, half of whom agreed to stop lying and the other half who received no instructions. After 10 weeks, the group that lied less often had 54 per cent fewer mental complaints like stress or anxiety and 56 per cent fewer physical health issues like headaches or digestive issues.

Constant lying also has the potential to spiral into something bigger. It can impact memory for one, as the brain works overtime to keep track of the different versions. Also, "sometimes, we end up believing those lies," says Sreedhar. "We start living a parallel reality that can lead to mental health issues."

The Pinocchio effect

Turns out, there's some truth behind Pinocchio's nose. But unlike Carlo Collodi's famous character, whose nose becomes long every time he lies, ours doesn't. On the contrary, it actually shrinks due to a drop in temperature, and yes, it's called the Pinocchio effect. And relax, the change is invisible to the naked eye. Meaning, your grandma won't know when you tell her you love the black-and-yellow jumper with big red buttons that she knitted for you!

So, what really happens when we lie? According to a research paper published in 'Psychophysiology' (The Pinocchio effect and the Cold Stress Test: Lies and thermography, 2017), participants invented a lie and narrated it over the phone to a close associate while they were recorded by a thermographic camera. The results threw up a connection between changes in body temperature and mental activity. The temperature of the nose and hand dropped — the body's way of trying to regulate and manage the strain.



The lies we tell online

The compunctions we may have about lying in the real world are thrown to the winds in the virtual world. Especially when you need to stand out among the millions of images posted on, say, Instagram. Bring on the filters, the camera tricks and editing apps to put out your carefully curated life, to make that fish pond look like an exotic locale as you sip a tequila against a setting sun, or to pretend that the swanky car along the sidewalk is your latest buy. Or, in the experience of Sandeep, a post to impress that keeps the like button ticking.

"The deep desire to be recognised and get fame is being fulfilled by not achieving something in career, academics, etc. Today, you can get famous by just acting famous, which is such a shortcut," says Aabharna Sudhakar, a counsellor and psychologist. "Most people have low resilience, desire immediate gratification, so to wait patiently for years to get recognised for their hard work seems a Herculean task, while getting on social media can make them famous through just one viral video," she says.

However, the likes may boost one's morale and esteem in the present; over time, this can lead to darker consequences.

"We try to project who we are not and move away from our authentic identity," says Sreedhar. "This increases stress levels as we have to continue being who we are not. And when we are caught, it leads to humiliation and loss of credibility, leaving us more isolated and with lower self-esteem."

Very few human beings can go through life without lying. That said, if these lies can unleash disaster in your lives, mentally, physically and socially, isn't it simpler to just state the plain truth? Just ask a certain CEO and HR head, last seen enjoying an intimate moment at Chris Martin's concert ...

> We try to project who we are not and move away from our authentic identity. This increases stress levels as we have to continue being who we are not. And when we are caught, our self-esteem plunges.

A new headache for honest students

A few weeks into her second year of college, Leigh Burrell got a notification that made her stomach drop. She had received a zero on an assignment worth 15% of her final grade in a required writing course. In a brief note, her professor explained that he believed she had outsourced the composition of her paper — a mock cover letter — to an artificial intelligence chatbot.

But Burrell's submission was not, in fact, the instantaneous output of a chatbot. According to Google Docs editing history that was reviewed by *The New York Times*, she had drafted and revised the assignment over two days. It was flagged anyway by a service offered by the plagiarism-detection company Turnitin that aims to identify text generated by artificial intelligence. Panicked, Burrell appealed the decision. Her grade was restored after she sent a 15-page PDF of time-stamped screenshots and notes from her writing process to the chair of her English department.

Still, the episode made her painfully aware of the hazards of being a student — even an honest one — in an academic landscape distorted by AI cheating.

Generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, are reshaping education for the students who use them to cut corners. According to a Pew Research survey conducted last year, 26% of teenagers said they had used ChatGPT for schoolwork, double the rate of the previous year. Students' use of AI chatbots to compose essays and solve coding problems has sent teachers scrambling for solutions.

But the spectre of AI misuse, and the imperfect systems used to root it out, may also be affecting students who are following the rules.

In interviews, high school, college and graduate students described persistent anxiety about being accused of using AI on work they had completed themselves — and facing potentially devastating academic consequences. In response, many students have imposed methods of self-surveillance that they say feel more like self-preservation. Some record their screens for hours at a time as they do their schoolwork. Others make a point of composing class papers using only word processors that track their keystrokes closely enough to produce a detailed edit history.

The next time Burrell had to submit an assignment for the class in which she had been accused of using AI, she uploaded a 93-minute YouTube video documenting her writing process. It was annoying, she said, but necessary for her peace of mind.

These students' fears are borne out by research reported in *The Washington Post* and *Bloomberg Businessweek*, indicating that AI-detection software, a booming industry in recent years, often misidentifies work as AI-generated. A new study of a dozen AI-detection services by researchers at the University of Maryland found that they had erroneously flagged human-written text as AI-generated about 6.8% of the time, on average.

Sydney Gill, an 18-year-old high school senior in San Francisco, said she appreciated that teachers were in an extremely difficult position when it came to navigating an academic environment jumbled by AI. She added that she had second-guessed her writing ever since an essay she entered in a writing competition in late 2023 was wrongly marked as AI generated.

That anxiety persisted as she wrote college application essays this year. "I don't want to say it's life-changing, but it definitely altered how I approach all of my writing in the future," she said.

NYT

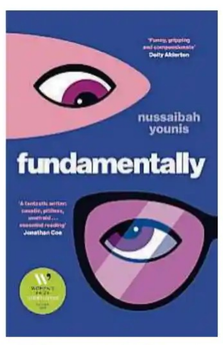
This is a sharp, witty satire on aid agencies and ISIS brides and an entertaining political caper, but one that ultimately sidesteps weightier themes, writes Sheila Kumar

Faith, farce and feminism

The author skewers bureaucracy with wit and bite, but her satire on ISIS brides is more entertaining than enlightening. (PIC FOR REPRESENTATION)

Let's talk about the author first. Dr Nussaibah Younis, who studied at Oxford, Durham and Harvard, and has a PhD in International Affairs, is a peacebuilding practitioner and an Iraq expert. At one time, she advised the Iraqi government on programmes to deradicalise women affiliated with ISIS.

Now, let's talk about her debut work of fiction, titled Fundamentally, which was on the shortlist for the 2025 Women's Prize. The novel is a wicked piece of satire rooted in reality, using humour to deliver some sharp jabs on how aid agencies (in this novel, the holies of holies, the United Nations) set up projects without much thought or due diligence, and then go about the job in ham-handed fashion.



FUNDAMENTALLY
Nussaibah Younis
W&N Books, pp 317, Rs 1,690

Younis' protagonist Dr Nadia Amin, a British Muslim, is an advisor to the UN in Iraq, currently leading a programme (whimsically named UNDO) to deradicalise 'ISIS brides'. Out there, first in Baghdad, then in the camp where the women are held, Nadia quickly realises she has bitten off more than she can chew. Her team is a laconic, not too invested duo, at least in the beginning; the strategy planning is near nil; there's really been no outreach to the sullen, suspicious women 'affiliated' to the ISIS huddled in the camps with no real hope of repatriation; there's major politics in the workplace with the aid workers mostly jaded, corrupt, condescending.

Not a deep look

Nadia comes across as very young for her thirty-something years and very naive too, quickly getting close to one of the ISIS brides, Sara, a pugnacious young mother of a baby and a survivor of three marriages. At one point, Sara calls Nadia a 'slag with a saviour complex', and you have to wonder if she doesn't have a point. Before the reader knows it, the UN representative is engaged in a clandestine rescue of Sarah and her baby. Said rescue goes off without too many hiccups and is only mildly harrowing, and that's when things start to get interesting.

It is a moot point whether the orthodox Sara really wanted to be rescued; maybe all she wanted was to be reunited with her little girl, who was in the custody of her dead ISIS fighter husband's parents. Nadia's attempts to open up Sara's world meet with a contemptuous, hostile response. But this isn't a deep look at the miseries of ISIS brides, just a compassionate one, so we have Nadia and Sara muddling through their new life after crossing over to Turkey, all their moral ambiguities intact, and a happy ending clearly glowing on the horizon for them both.

The humour is sharp, the characters are well-drawn. There's a lot of bonking, a lot of cussing, a lot of funds diverted to luxurious junkets, and much snark. There's a very good description of moderation in religion being nothing but a tolerance for dissonance. At one point, Sara says she ran off to join ISIS because of the agency it gave her; otherwise, there was nothing cool to be a Muslim in London. In another cynical but credible passage, aid workers give trenchant examples of training women for jobs in Africa after which the women go join brothels, get medicines for the destitute at subsidised rates only for the destitute to mark it up and sell it on the black market, try to bring about peace amongst tribes only for the tribesmen to go at each other with murder in their hearts. Where this reviewer had a problem was that the book seemed to fall between two stools: a witty exposé on international aid bodies and their causes, and a funny but perceptive take on the problem the ISIS brides have put out there in the world for themselves and for those who would rehabilitate them. Neither is addressed with enough attention, just as the topics of radicalisation/orthodoxy/Muslims in the West being othered/faith or the lack of it /the condition of the ISIS brides in the camp are all touched upon only superficially.

So, you get a political caper story that engages you for the duration of the read, after which you shut it and forget it.

In other words, this is no Catch-22, which made you chortle even as you mused on the utter futility of war.

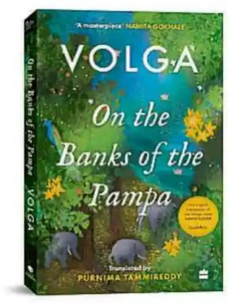
Holding her own, fighting her demons

This is an intriguing novel that merges the story of Sabari from the Ramayana with modern-day ecological concerns, writes Parvathi Ramkumar

On the Banks of the Pampa by Volga focuses on Sabari, bringing to the forefront a character briefly mentioned in the Ramayana. In this tale, Sabari, the mystic, ascetic and sage who dwells in the forest, is given a detailed backstory. And while she is serene when she meets Lord Rama, the shadows of her past have shaped her.

The forest is evoked through strong and deliberate prose, and Sabari herself is a symbol of resilience through it all. Translated from the Telugu by Purnima Tammireddy, the novella recounts Sabari's journey from enslavement under a predatory state to her self-chosen life on the banks of the Pampa River. The forest shelters her, gives her sanctuary, and allows her to turn to spirituality and wisdom in her ashram. The story engages with themes of caste, ecological stewardship, and the sheer force of will of the forest dwellers, who try to hold their own against the incursions of the kingdom. The narrative is short, at a little over 120 pages, although it is grand in scope and theme.

Sabari is transformed from an escaped slave to a sage, with the forest being her backdrop and home. It is a living presence with its trees, animals, and clear river water. Sabari is elderly, and the events take place right before the appearance of Lord Rama for the most part, but there are also timeline shifts as her childhood and upbringing are brought to the forefront as she reminisces.



ON THE BANKS OF THE PAMPA
Volga
Harper, pp 164, Rs 299

Her experiences are sharp and brutal, and the novella's feminist focus is couched in ecological explorations.

The forest communities attempt to preserve nature and its living ecosystem. The city dwellers are arrogant, always seeking to expand, and they care little for trees or animal life. The kingdom, to them, is an extension of God, and no forest dweller can hope to challenge that. Fields are destroyed, woodlands are cleared, animals are slaughtered, and those who oppose the *rajyam* are forced into slavery. There are tensions among castes, violence, mockery, and wanton destruction of families and homes.

And yet, there are certain moments of disorientation. The ecological message, while resonant, is sometimes delivered in a manner that feels more aligned with contemporary environmental activism than with the concerns of the period. The dichotomy between city-dwellers as destroyers and forest-dwellers as custodians, while effective in framing urgency, risks flattening nuance and breaking immersion. Similarly, there are also anachronistic references to barbed wire fences. The description of the slave camps appears more suited for a twentieth-century context than an ancient Indian one.

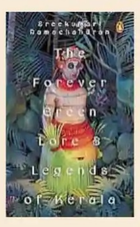
The idea of kingdoms being divinely ordained entities is also heavy-handed in the novel. The conflicts have a modern flavour to them, and the villains of the story are almost comically evil. There are some reinterpretations of Lord Rama's forest exile as well, for here, it is not just banishment. He seeks to spread the idea of culture and civilisation among the original inhabitants of the south. Ravana is imagined to be what is akin to an aboriginal king, while the race of Rama believes they are superior, and therefore, duty-bound to civilise the barbarian. Indeed, one of the offers of the city folk to the forest dwellers is agriculture.

The book's brevity allows it to maintain an almost uninterrupted tonal unity, and it does read smoothly. Each scene, whether of forest labour or remembered captivity, is weighted toward its thematic role.

Despite the anachronisms and somewhat surprising reinterpretations, there is a cadence to the prose and a feminist thread to the tale that makes it an approachable read, which is also a credit to the translator. There are some unexpected moments where the essence of the Ramayana is reinterpreted as a clash of cultures, one of the invader and one of the original natives, and there are times when there are too many ideas squeezed into the short narrative. Some characters, while retaining their essence, are also recast as wholly different individuals whose motives are questionable at times, but at the end of it all, they attempt to do what duty expects of them.

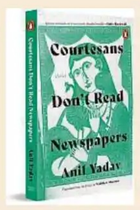
Overall, On the Banks of the Pampa is an intriguing work, succinctly told.

BOOKRACK



THE FOREVER GREEN LORE
Sreekumari Ramachandran
Penguin, pp 400, Rs NA
Dive into the enchanting world of this book, where history and mysticism intertwine to create a tapestry of cultural heritage that is both vibrant and timeless.

THE MIDNIGHT SHIFT
Cheon Seon-Ran
Bloomsbury, pp 298, Rs 599
When four isolated elderly people die back-to-back at the same hospital by jumping out of the sixth floor window, SuYeon doesn't understand why she's the only one at her precinct that seems to care.



COURTESANS DON'T READ NEWSPAPERS
Anil Yadav
Penguin, pp 224, Rs 299
These are a collection of stories that force you to stretch your emotions, question the world of privilege, as the characters begin to find their way somewhere deep within you.

A SHIMLA AFFAIR
Srishti Chaudhary
Penguin, pp 312, Rs 350
Nalini and her two older sisters run the Royal Hotel Shimla. But when an underground revolutionary group asks them to aid a murderous conspiracy, they find themselves thrust headfirst into a dangerous game of lies.

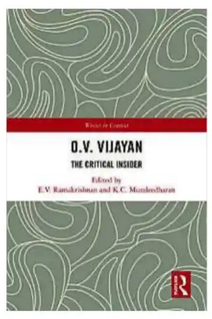
THE DEAD FISH
Rajkamal Choudhary
Rupa, pp 200, Rs 495
Translated into English for the first time, this novel explores the psychological depths of Nirmal Padmavat, a ruthless businessman whose personal life is marked by emotional volatility and contradictory sexuality.

Tracing the journey of a multi-realm traveller

This engaging collection of articles, observations, and insights offers a deep dive into the world of O V Vijayan, an extraordinary genius, writes AVS Namboodiri

This book, edited by poet and critic EV Ramakrishnan and eminent academic KC Muraleedharan, gives a comprehensive view of OV Vijayan's world, mapped with his works, cartoons, commentaries, interviews, letters and other markers of the mind. It tries to assess him in the context of the world in which he lived, worked, wrote and evolved and provides a one-stop source for information about him. Vijayan spanned many worlds, and it is difficult to use the same standards to measure his presence in all of them. He was complex and versatile, and the writers in this volume have used diverse tools to assess him. We get a good picture of the writer, the cartoonist, the commentator, the spiritual seeker, and above all, the person who moved through all these stations of the mind. Vijayan is best understood as a traveller through these realms, and the writers have succeeded in tracing his journey through them.

The book is in two parts. It introduces the reader to Vijayan's creative and reflective worlds with excerpts from his works. It also studies them from the reader's and the critic's perspective. Vijayan wrote in two languages and moved with ease between them. He was also a cartoonist who spoke with lines and laughter. The book contains sections from his novels, including The Legends of Khasak and The Saga of Dharmapuri and some short stories in translation from Malayalam. Autobiographical notes, interviews and correspondence are included, as are studies of translations of his works — Vijayan was his own translator. There is a section that looks at his intellectual and philosophical ideas and engagements. Some of his cartoons are reproduced, and we find some fine studies of the cartoons and the cartooning mind. There is also a section on Vijayan in the 21st century, which contains some contemporary views of his works. A timeline of his life and works, photos, and an exhaustive bibliography make it a complete volume.



O V VIJAYAN: A CRITICAL INSIDER
Ed: E V Ramakrishnan and K C Muraleedharan
Routledge, pp 348, Rs 1,295

A statue of O V Vijayan at Palakkad in Kerala. (PIC COURTESY: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/BIGUL MALAYI)

The book describes Vijayan as a critical insider, a term used by UR Ananthamurthy to refer to an organic intellectual who is not a prisoner of any ideology. Ananthamurthy's words: "In India, the creative people are those who have roots in their own tradition, while at the same time are also exposed to the West." This was true with Vijayan, whose writing and persona evolved over time. Actually, what matters perhaps is not that they evolved but how they evolved. For critical insiders, art and life become sites for experimenting, as it was for a person whose name does not need to be mentioned. Involved in this process is the relation between the individual and the world, and in the case of artists, the relationship between their work and the person, too. This works in strange ways for critical insiders in India. When they try to change the world, they change themselves. They get the sense they are changing the world when they try to change themselves. It is more complicated in the case of artists and writers, and especially for those such as Vijayan who had many avenues to express himself through and which impacted each other. K Satchidanandan, in his essay, says Vijayan had a double awareness that gave him a kind of detachment that was the source of his laughter, which was closer to that of a Vyasa than of a Mark Twain. It had its roots in the predicament of the artist as the critical insider.

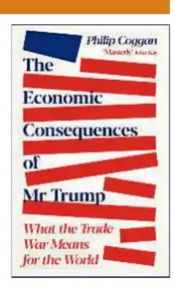
I think this idea, in its various forms, shapes the theme of the book and holds it together, even as individual articles study the works. Vijayan's works are such that they hide unexpected meanings and patterns, and the reader is often surprised by their discovery. They have literary, social, political and philosophical dimensions. They deal with human relations within the family and community, especially gender issues. He engaged at the same time with the challenges and contradictions of both tradition and modernity. Vijayan started as a writer in a minor language and evolved to speak a national and universal language, and went beyond it. He created a new sensibility in Malayalam and even influenced the newspaper language, the lowest common denotation of the spoken and written word. He created a new cartooning language, too. Writings about his works, the best of which we see in this volume, also gained a new language, created new tools of understanding and developed new critical sensibilities. These articles, observations and insights, are good guides to the world of an extraordinary genius. Vijayan's themes and concerns are still relevant, and that adds to the book's value.

READ OF THE WEEK

Tariffs, trade wars and market busts. Looming recession, uncertainty and squeezed living standards. It's economics, but not as we know it. As Donald Trump strives to 'Make America Great Again', what will become of a global economic system based on close trading links between countries that has shaped the world for the better? And what does it mean for us all?

Top financial journalist Philip Coggan lifts the lid on Trump's economic gamble, why it's such a threat and how we can make sense of this new 'age of chaos' in his new book, The Economic Consequences of Mr Trump. The result is a rallying cry for the importance of global trade and a reminder of the dramatic changes to geopolitics and economics that we all need to understand.

Philip Coggan is a former *Economist* and *Financial Times* journalist. In 2009, he was voted Senior Financial Journalist of the Year in the Wincott awards and best communicator in the Business Journalist of the Year Awards. Among his books are *The Money Machine, Paper Promises*, the highly acclaimed *More: The 10,000-Year Rise of the World Economy*, and *Surviving the Daily Grind*.



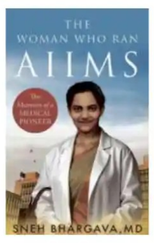
BREAKING BARRIERS

Dr Sneh Bhargava

Healing bias

In 19th-century India, sons were valued for their economic utility as they provided labour, carried on the family lineage, and brought in dowries through marriages, while daughters were seen as liabilities. This bias began in the home and extended to society, where boys were favoured with better food, education, and opportunities, while girls' contributions were undervalued. The roots of this gender bias run deep in culture and economics.

At India's independence, there were only 17 medical colleges with very few women students. The Lady Hardinge Medical College, founded in 1916, was one of the few institutions dedicated to women's medical education. I joined in 1948, right after Partition, a time of immense suffering and need for medical care, which solidified my decision to pursue medicine.



Despite the college's initial charter to be led by women, a male principal was appointed post-Independence, sparking a student strike. Eventually, Dr Carol Birch, an American, became principal. I had supportive parents and studied radiology abroad, a field considered unconventional at the time. Some asked, "Will you look at black-and-white images all your life?" I responded, "Perhaps one day, they'll become technical." Returning to India, I joined AIIMS, steadily progressing until I was appointed Director in 1984. However, my leadership was met with resistance, especially after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination on the day of my appointment. There were doubts: "Can a woman run AIIMS?" I responded, "If Indira Gandhi can run the country, I can certainly run AIIMS." Thankfully, Rajiv Gandhi confirmed my appointment shortly after. Women still face healthcare challenges today. Gender-based neglect contributes to the death of more girls under five annually, while maternal health disparities persist. Though programmes like Janani Suraksha Yojana have improved maternal care, significant gaps remain. Additionally, medical research has historically excluded women. Until the 1990s, clinical trials were overwhelmingly male, skewing treatment outcomes for women. Conditions like endometriosis and autoimmune diseases are still misdiagnosed due to gender biases. Women in medicine also face barriers. Training environments often lack female mentors, and women bear the double burden of professional and domestic duties. While over 50% of MBBS students are women, fewer than a third pursue post-graduate studies due to family obligations and societal pressures. Leadership opportunities remain limited: only 18% of healthcare leadership roles are held by women. Of the 46 major medical associations, just 19.5% are led by women. At AIIMS, only one of 16 directors is female, and among the 18 new AIIMS, only three are led by women.

(Dr Sneh Bhargava, the only woman Director of AIIMS in its 70-year-old history in New Delhi, recently published The Woman Who Ran AIIMS with Juggernaut.)

Focus on 4 key areas

Inclusive research: Women must be adequately represented in clinical studies to ensure accurate treatments.

Gender-sensitive training: Healthcare providers must be trained to address gender-specific health needs.

Leadership equity: We need mentorship programmes and policy reforms to elevate women into leadership roles.

Cultural change: Challenge stereotypes and create environments where women's voices are respected.

WOMEN & WEALTH

Women are increasingly taking control of their finances, closing the wealth gap through smart investments, entrepreneurship, and financial independence, write Dr Prasanna Chandra & Savita Shrimal

Women have a natural advantage when it comes to navigating the complex world of finance. Advances in neuroscience reveal that the male and female brains operate differently, providing women with unique strengths in managing their financial lives.

For one, women have a larger corpus callosum — the tissue connecting the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The right hemisphere governs emotion and creativity, while the left controls logic and reason. This enhanced cross-hemisphere connection in women enables them to more intuitively link words and emotions, a trait that proves valuable in financial decision-making. Women are generally more attuned to language, expression, and emotional cues, which helps them communicate their needs and aspirations clearly, especially when planning for the future.

Dr Prasanna Chandra

Savita Shrimal

In financial matters, women tend to approach decision-making holistically, often considering long-term outcomes. Unlike men, who often associate wealth with status or power, women view wealth as a means of security. While men tend to have a more short-term focus, women prioritise stability and future planning, particularly around retirement and education.

Studies suggest women are 'risk-aware' rather than 'risk-averse.' They take a more measured approach to risk, requiring a firm understanding before making financial decisions. This cautiousness means they are less likely to be swept up in market panic or 'irrational exuberance,' as some financial planners put it. Women's tendency for thoroughness, paired with their emotional sensitivity, leads to more comprehensive, well-considered financial strategies. Today, more women are taking charge of their financial futures, whether through investments, entrepreneurship, or financial planning. Here are some of the most promising trends:

A growing presence of women investors

Women now make up 22% of stock market investors and 28% of mutual fund investors in India. They are disciplined and focused, with nearly 71% of women investors staying invested for more than five years. Their decisions are often driven by long-term goals like retirement planning and securing their children's education.

Empowerment through financial independence

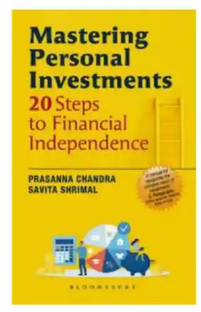
Financial independence gives women control over their lives, enabling them to make confident decisions without reliance on others. Independent women are more likely to negotiate salaries, advocate for equal pay, and serve as role models for younger generations, promoting financial literacy and empowerment.

Government initiatives & digital finance

Government programmes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Stand-Up India aim to increase financial inclusion among women. Meanwhile, mobile banking services like UPI and fintech apps are helping women manage their finances more independently. In fact, women account for over 30% of UPI transactions in India.

Women in entrepreneurship

Women are increasingly embracing entrepreneurship, with many starting businesses in fields such as technology, fashion, and e-commerce. A recent study found that 70% of women entrepreneurs are motivated by self-aspiration rather than financial necessity. Government initiatives like the Mahila Vikas Nidhi, Mudra Yojana, and Udyogini Scheme provide much-needed support to women-led businesses.



As women continue to build wealth and make informed financial decisions, the gender wealth gap is narrowing. With more access to education, financial tools, and entrepreneurial opportunities, women are carving out their own path to financial security and independence. This shift not only empowers women but also contributes to a more equitable society.

By supporting and encouraging women in finance, we're not just investing in individuals but in a future where financial independence is accessible to all, regardless of gender.

(Dr Prasanna Chandra is Director of the Centre for Financial Management, Bengaluru, and Savita Shrimal is a qualified CFP and CWM with an MSc in Applied Finance. They are authors of Mastering Personal Investments, recently published by Bloomsbury.)

TRAVEL

The wild side of Ooty

Explore the unspoiled Nilgiris with pristine forests, charming villages, scenic treks, and a nostalgic ride on the heritage toy train, writes Akber Ayub

A startled herd of deer. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

The Nilgiri Mountain Railway is a Unesco World Heritage Site. IMAGE COURTESY WIKIPEDIA

The lights dimmed at 10 pm. Shortly after, the distant hum of the generator faded, and almost instantly, the forest reclaimed the night. An amber halo from the hurricane lamp hanging on a pole in front of my log hut struggled to cut through the growing darkness, casting an eerie glow. Beyond, two similarly designed cabins, perched on stilts and unoccupied, looked forlorn in the pale light of the half-moon. Further ahead, a row of military-style tents sat on elevated platforms along a winding path, their own hurricane lamps standing guard.

Amid rustling leaves and cracking branches, the forest came alive. Insects, birds, and night creatures, awakened by the sudden onset of darkness, filled the air with their sounds. Over the soft patter of rain on foliage, an owl hooted intermittently. The raucous cry of a barking deer joined in, while restless simians leapt across tree limbs, creating a brief commotion.

I've always found a strange peace in the embrace of raw nature. Eager to get a closer look at the wild Nilgiris, I checked into this jungle lodge in the late evening, a perfect getaway on the outskirts of Ooty. After a modest dinner under a tent, I retired to my log hut for the night.

Up at the crack of dawn, I stepped out of my cabin in a hurry, lugging a backpack with the essentials for the day. It was still a while before dawn broke, but the air was filled with the soft chirping of birds. The gnarled old trees whispered under the intermittent gusts as I made my way towards Glenmorgan.

For those who seek a deeper connection with nature, who are adventurous enough to veer off the beaten path, the outlying areas of these mountains — part of the Western Ghats and a Unesco-declared ecological hotspot — offer hidden gems. These places, unspoiled and pristine, feature stunning vistas and serene beauty that will touch you in a way no ordinary tourist spot can. Glenmorgan, Western Catchment, Parson's Valley, Pukurthi Forest Reserve, Moyar, Singara, and Segur Falls are just a few of the lesser-known but must-see spots within 40 kms of Ooty. Snowden Peak on the Kotagiri Road offers breathtaking views of Mysuru, Wenlock Downs, and Kalhatty Falls. The list goes on — Avalanche, around 28 kms from Ooty, is a paradise for nature lovers, although the lake has been closed off since a landslide years ago. These places are particularly magical at twilight when they lie veiled in dream-like splendour.

Gaur, or the Indian Bison.

The British colonialists were among the first to recognise the Nilgiri Mountains' beauty. The history of Ooty begins with John Sullivan, the Collector of Coimbatore, who sent two surveyors, Keys and McMohan, to explore the area. Impressed by the region's natural beauty, Sullivan himself ventured further into the Ghats. Soon, they began clearing forests and building roads, and he constructed the first English house in Ooty, the Stone House, which remains one of the most famous landmarks today. The British were so captivated by Ooty's scenery that they made it the summer capital of the Madras Presidency. As a local guide once told me, "Later, the Madras Regiment of the Indian Army was stationed here, and the station remains there to this day."

Returning to my trip, I mostly ignored the surrounding countryside as I sped along the interstate highway towards Glenmorgan. Though only 20 kms from my lodge and about 35 kms from Ooty, Glenmorgan felt far removed from the town's hustle and bustle. The name conjures images of idyllic English countryside — sweeping grasslands, meadows, and rolling hills — completed with a scenic lake, rugged mountains in the backdrop, and a small cluster of quaint cottages.

The Nilgiri langur is an endangered primate found only in the region. IMAGE COURTESY WIKIPEDIA

There was little traffic at this time, and I zipped through the morning air, my car gliding effortlessly on the smooth tarmac. I'd secured permission from the Electricity Board the previous day, and the guard at the entrance waved me through without a fuss. The dam here lies deep inside a tea estate and supplies water to the Pykara Power Plant. A trekking trail leads from here to the Pykara Junction powerhouse, passing through tea estates and tribal villages, offering stunning views of hills, valleys, and even the Mudumalai National Park. But you'll need prior approval from the forest department to hike this trail. There's also a ropeway offering panoramic views, though you'd need authorisation from the Electricity Board superintendent at Kundah to take that ride. Other trekking routes include Longwood Shola, Karikkayur to Rangaswamy Peak, Parsons Valley to Mukurthihut, and a few others. Trekkers must pre-register their names on www.trektamilnadu.com, with tribal guides often accompanying the expeditions. If you love the idea of driving through picturesque woodlands, outlying hamlets like Kinnakorai and Mulli on the Kerala border offer beautiful drives. The joy here isn't just in reaching a destination but in experiencing the tranquil ride through densely wooded forests with hardly a vehicle in sight. By midday, I was back on the road, heading towards Kalhatti Falls, located around 15 kms from Ooty. From the Kalahatti village, a two-mile trek is required to reach the falls. A local forest guard shared, "This route is a birdwatcher's paradise, but you'll need to watch out for the occasional wild animal."

A cascade framed in green.

No trip to the Nilgiris would be complete without a ride on the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, a Unesco World Heritage site. The train's tracks wind through lush green landscapes, disappearing behind rolling hills, the crisp air filled with the fragrance of eucalyptus trees standing tall like silent sentinels. As the train snakes through dark tunnels, the rhythmic sound of the locomotive's exhaust fills the air, and the passengers' excited shouts echo.

The narrow metre-gauge train, which takes 46 kms from Mettupalayam at the foot of the Nilgiris to Ooty, is often referred to as a "toy train" due to its diminutive size and slow pace. A Swiss-made steam engine, which completed the journey in more than five hours when it first ran in 1908, still powers the train today. The century-old viaducts and bridges are unsuitable for heavier diesel engines, so vintage steam engines continue to make the journey, except on the Coonoor-Ooty stretch, where diesel engines take over.

The train travels at a leisurely 30 km/h on flat stretches, slowing to a crawl of 13 km/h while climbing steep gradients. "The train uses a rack and pinion system," says the station master at Lovedale, "which ensures it doesn't slip backwards on the steep climbs." The train leaves Mettupalayam at 7 am, stopping at quaint stations like Kallar, Adderley Hilligrove, Runnymede, Kateri Coonoor, Wellington, and Lovedale before reaching Ooty by noon. Many of these stations still rely on sturdy but old equipment set up by the British. And, of course, who could forget the famous "*Chaiyya Chaiyya*" song from *Dil Se t*hat was filmed atop this very train?

THALI wisdom

Simple, seasonal, and sustainable, the Indian *thali* is a gut-friendly meal philosophy that's been ahead of its time, writes Ranjini Rao

While talking to a friend who is battling chronic gut issues, I noticed something interesting. The seemingly disparate threads of advice he'd been receiving from different health practitioners actually shared some fundamental overlaps.

A gastroenterologist had recommended probiotic supplements and prescribed a "nothing that bites back" approach, allowing most foods in moderation, as long as they were easy on the stomach. Meanwhile, an Ayurvedic doctor had offered a detailed list of dietary dos and don'ts: a line-up of favourable gourds, and an even longer one of fruits and vegetables to avoid.

Ranjini Rao

Neither plan seemed to be helping much. The first was too vague, the second too rigid, especially when even his cook was struggling to adapt the recipes. While flipping through the exhaustive list of ingredients he was advised to avoid, I caught myself pitching an idea: what if he simply adopted a tweaked version of the South Indian *thali*? With the right seasonal ingredients, appropriate spices, and minor adjustments, the everyday *oota* could serve his gut well.

That's when it struck me... the South Indian *thali* is more than just a meal, it's a system. A beautifully balanced, intuitive, and sustainable way of eating that doubles up as a philosophy.

A well-made *thali* is a rhythmic arrangement of grains, pulses, vegetables, curd, pickles, and sometimes sweets, brought together not just for flavour, but for nutrition, seasonal alignment, and long-term well-being. Long before "clean eating," "gut health," or "carbon footprint" became common lingo, our ancestors were eating in ways that supported the environment, the body, and the community.

THE GREENTHEORY

Grinding pastes by hand, cooking on wood fires, using every edible part of the plant, and relying on what grew around them — these were everyday practices, not trends. And they still hold the answers we seek in today's confusing health landscape.

In our search for gut-friendly meals, the answer may lie not in new diets, but in old wisdom. The South Indian *thali* — seasonal, plant-forward, low-waste, and fermented — isn't just a cultural artefact. It's a living, breathing roadmap to wellness. When approached with intention and a bit of adaptation, it offers a sustainable and satisfying solution for both our gut and the planet.

(Ranjini is a communications professor, author, and podcaster, straddling many other worlds, in Bengaluru. She's passionate about urban farming and sustainable living, and can mostly be found cooking and baking in her little kitchen, where, surrounded by heirloom coffee kettles and mismatched tea cups, she finds her chi.)

What makes the thali a smart, sustainable meal?

Seasonal by design... eating what's in season naturally reduces dependence on cold storage, long-distance transport, artificial ripening, or shelf-life enhancers.

In the monsoon, we eat a variety of greens. Winter brings avarekai and root vegetables. Summer meals feature gourds, brinjals, and mangoes. Jackfruit finds its way into curries, stir-fries, or desserts. Growing up, I don't recall seeing apples in summer or spotting avarekai out of season – what was available determined what we ate.

This is both sustainable and gut-supportive, because the body's nutritional needs change with the seasons. Our ancestors knew this, even without microbiome studies or lab results.

■ **Diversity of grains:** A traditional thali doesn't rely solely on polished rice or wheat. Millets – ragi, bajra, jowar – are a frequent feature.

These grains require minimal agricultural input, can be rain-fed, and don't need extensive post-harvest processing. They also naturally encourage slower eating due to their texture and chew, aiding digestion and mindfulness at the table.

Incorporating different grains also diversifies your gut flora – a cornerstone of gut health.

■ **Low waste ethos:** Hardy stems from greens become chutneys. Ridge gourd peels are turned into delicious sides. Leftover rice transforms into nourishing ganji or tangy chitranna the next day.

Banana blossoms, jackfruit seeds, and even potato skins find their way into the cooking pot. This no-waste culture is deeply ingrained in traditional South Indian cooking – waste minimisation isn't an afterthought, it's built into the design.

■ **Fermented foods:** Fermentation is central to the thali's ecosystem – idlis, dosas, buttermilk, pickles, and ganji are all traditional staples. These foods boost gut health through natural probiotics. Often prepared in clay or steel vessels passed down generations, these fermented dishes are time-tested for both preservation and digestion.

■ **Locally sourced, intelligently foraged:** A thali leans heavily on local produce and backyard bounty. Whether it's wild greens like purslane and wood sorrel growing in the garden, or herbs picked from a neighbour's yard, cooking is often driven by availability rather than excess.

This reliance on indigenous, regional ingredients not only sustains local farming economies but also reintroduces us to our forgotten food heritage. Eating local strengthens immunity, reduces food miles, and supports biodiversity – critical issues in both health and environmental conversations today.

A gut-friendly, easy-to-cook thali

Here's a sample thali that's gentle on the stomach, easy to make, and rooted in traditional ingredients and methods:

■ **Millet pongal**
Soak 1 cup of any millet (foxtail works well) for 4–5 hours or overnight. Combine with ¼ cup moong dal, a little ghee, crushed cumin and pepper, salt, and pressure cook for 10 minutes. Once done, add a tempering of cumin seeds, hing, and curry leaves in ghee.

■ **Ridge gourd peel chutney**
Use about 1 cup of ridge gourd peels. Roast green chillies, methi seeds, urad and chana dal in a teaspoon of oil. Add the peels, cook until they lose their bright green colour. Cool and blend with coconut, salt, jaggery, and tamarind pulp.

■ **Moringa dal**
Soak ½ cup toor dal overnight. Cook with cleaned moringa leaves, turmeric, salt, chillies, a pinch of hing, and a spoon of ghee. After pressure cooking, add a tempering of mustard, methi seeds, and curry leaves. Top with grated coconut if desired.

■ **Carrot kosambari**
Soak 2 tablespoons moong dal for an hour. Drain and mix with grated carrots, coconut, chopped coriander, lemon juice, and salt.

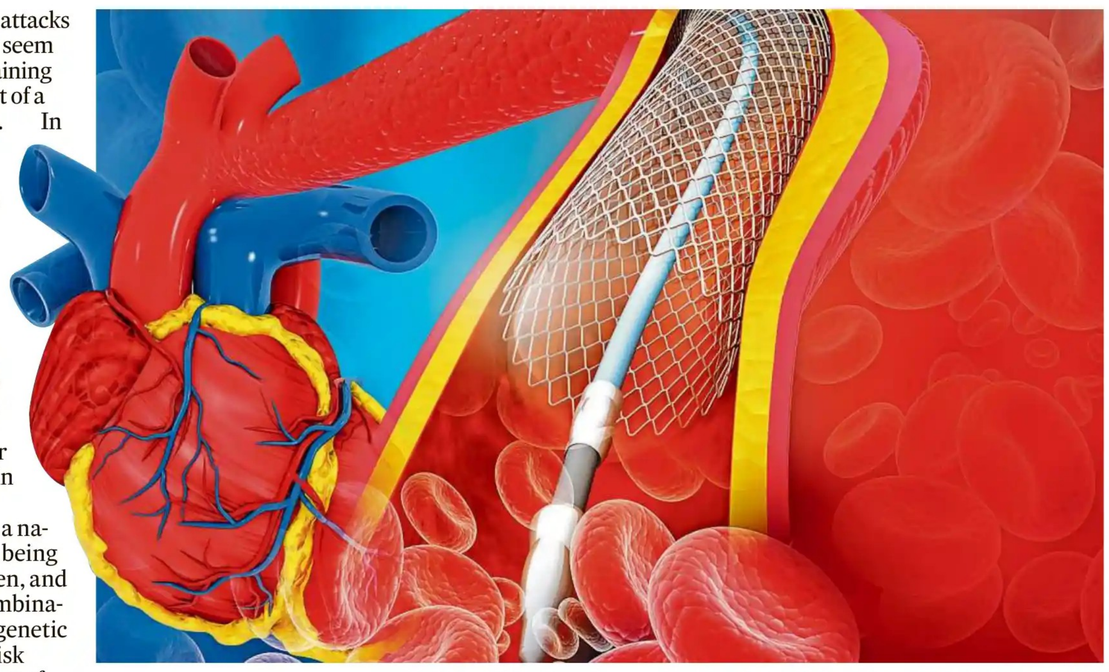
■ **Moong dal payasa**
Soak ¼ cup of moong dal for an hour. Cook with water and coconut milk until soft. Mash, sweeten with jaggery, and finish with a touch of cardamom.

Serve the meal with curd, pickle, and a roasted or fried papad of your choice.

WELLNESS

The heart of the matter

Heart attacks are rising due to lifestyle factors, genetic predispositions, and emerging health markers like hs-CRP, writes Dr Pradeep Haranahalli



The rising number of heart attacks among young people may seem like an isolated issue pertaining to India alone, but it is part of a larger global health trend. In Western countries, although overall heart attack rates are declining, the age at which people experience their first heart attack is steadily decreasing. Similarly, in India, heart attacks are becoming more common in individuals in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. Alarmingly, 50% of all heart attacks now occur in people under 50, with 1 in 5 happening in those under 40.

This troubling trend is a nationwide issue, with men being more affected than women, and no region is spared. A combination of lifestyle changes, genetic factors, and traditional risk factors, such as rising rates of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and dyslipidemia, is at the heart of this surge. These conditions are often linked to poor lifestyle choices.

Key contributing factors

• **Genetic predisposition:** South Asians, comprising people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives, are genetically predisposed to heart attacks. This is due to higher levels of certain cholesterol particles, like lipoprotein (a), and lower levels of HDL (the "good" cholesterol). Additionally, South Asians experience higher insulin resistance and a reduced ability to repair blood vessel damage, further elevating their risk, regardless of their geographic location.

• **Diabetes in the young:** Diabetes has reached epidemic levels in India, particularly among the younger population. Over the past 15 years, the number of diabetes diagnoses has doubled, and 1 in 4 individuals aged 15-24 are now living with the condition. Diabetes is often discovered during routine health checks or after a young person suffers a heart attack.

• **Obesity, poor eating habits, and sedentary lifestyles:** Obesity is on the rise, driven by factors such as mechanisation, reduced physical activity, and an increase in sedentary behaviours. While many attribute weight gain to the Covid-19 lockdowns, this trend has been ongoing. Urban environments, with their emphasis on convenience — like food delivery services, screen time, and work-from-home arrangements, further contribute to the rise in obesity.

• **Smoking, vaping, and substance abuse:** Smoking is a known risk factor for heart attacks, but vaping, despite being banned in India, remains accessible to youth. The use of substances like cocaine, which causes severe spasms in coronary arteries, is another hidden cause of heart attacks in young people, though it is often underreported.

• **Chronic stress and mental strain:** The fast pace and high demands of urban life contribute significantly to chronic stress. This stress often manifests in work pressure, financial strain, relationship issues, and sleep disturbances. In response, tobacco and alcohol consumption often increase, further heightening the risk of heart attacks.

• **Air pollution:** Emerging research shows that exposure to particulate matter (PM 2.5), a form of air pollution, is a significant risk factor for heart attacks. PM 2.5 promotes atherosclerosis, causes inflammation in blood vessels, encourages clot formation, and is linked to hypertension, all of which strain the heart.

• **hs-CRP (High-Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein):** hs-CRP is a promising marker for predicting heart attacks, as it indicates inflammation in the body. Chronic low-level inflammation is a key factor in atherosclerosis, which can lead to heart attacks. A 2008 study (JUPITER trial) involving over 17,000 participants found that elevated hs-CRP levels above 3 mg/L significantly increased heart attack risk, even in individuals with normal cholesterol levels. Statin medications like rosuvastatin can lower hs-CRP levels, reducing heart attack risk by 54%. Lifestyle changes, such as eating antioxidant-rich foods, exercising, managing weight, and quitting smoking and alcohol, can also lower hs-CRP levels. However, hs-CRP is not without limitations. While it indicates inflammation, it does not pinpoint the specific cause of the inflammation. Elevated hs-CRP can also result from infections, chronic diseases, obesity, or certain medications. Therefore, hs-CRP levels should be interpreted by a physician.

A growing concern

With heart attacks occurring at younger ages, it's crucial to move beyond traditional risk factors like diabetes, high blood pressure, and smoking. Newer markers — such as hs-CRP, lipoprotein(a), and Apo B — should be explored and tested to better assess and reduce heart attack risk in young people.

(The author is a consultant and interventional cardiologist.)

A crisis & a wake-up call

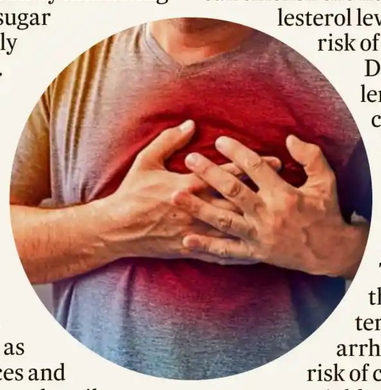
TUHIN MUKHERJEE

Young adults in India face rising heart risks due to poor diet, sedentary lifestyles, and unhealthy fitness practices.

In the past, parents often reassured their young-adult children: "Eat whatever you want, your heart is strong at this age." Youth was once considered a natural defence against heart problems. However, that perception is changing. An increasing number of young adults in India are succumbing to heart-related conditions, raising concerns about the underlying causes.

The primary issue? Excessive sugar consumption. While lifestyle factors such as a sedentary routine certainly play a role, the consumption of sugar, often disguised in everyday foods and beverages, is a significant contributor to cardiovascular risk.

Sugar, commonly added to tea or consumed in processed foods like pizzas, burgers, pastries, and soft drinks, contributes to serious damage to the arteries. It doesn't just increase the risk of diabetes; it also affects the arterial lining, leading to a buildup of plaque that can trigger dangerous blood clots. These clots disrupt blood flow and can lead to sudden heart attacks, often with little warning. In many countries, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is commonly used in sugary beverages, while in India, cane sugar is more prevalent. Both, however, have similar health impacts. The rise in sugar consumption is largely driven by marketing strategies that encourage sugar cravings, which are wrongly associated with happiness. This sugary intake, while offering temporary satisfaction, silently raises blood pressure, promotes obesity, and damages blood vessels, creating the ideal conditions for heart disease.



Excess sugar is not only found in sweetened drinks but also in foods marketed as "healthy," such as fruit juices and energy drinks. The widespread availability of these products means most people are consuming far more sugar than they realise. This excessive intake alters the body's metabolism, trains taste buds to crave more sugar, and gradually leads to severe health consequences, including weakened arterial health. In addition to poor dietary habits, modern sedentary lifestyles contribute to the decline in heart health. The lack of daily physical activity means muscles, including the heart, become less efficient. The heart, a muscular organ, suffers from a lack of exercise, which compromises its ability to pump blood effectively, increasing the risk of cardiovascular events. This decline is further exacerbated by oxidative stress, caused by environmental pollutants, poor diet, and mental fatigue, leading to damage in the delicate lining of the arteries. Over time, this damage makes the arterial walls more susceptible to cholesterol buildup, especially low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol. This leads to atherosclerosis, a condition where arteries become narrow and hardened, limiting blood flow and increasing the likelihood of heart attacks.

Sudden physical exertion, particularly among those who have led a sedentary lifestyle for years, can trigger a heart attack. A young adult who suddenly begins intense physical activity after a period of inactivity is at risk of overloading an unprepared cardiovascular system. The stress caused by rapid exertion, coupled with pre-existing arterial damage, can cause a rupture of plaque in the coronary arteries, leading to blood clots and potentially fatal consequences.

The gym, often seen as a solution to a sedentary lifestyle, also poses risks. Gym supplements, often marketed as products that enhance performance, can contain stimulants that increase heart rate and blood pressure. These stimulants, along with intense workouts, can precipitate arrhythmias, or irregular heart rhythms, which can be life-threatening. Additionally, the use of anabolic steroids, popular among some gym-goers seeking rapid muscle gain, can thicken the heart muscle and raise cholesterol levels, further increasing the risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

Dehydration is another silent threat. Intense exercise, combined with inadequate hydration or extreme dieting, can disturb the balance of electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, and magnesium. This imbalance can affect the heart's electrical system, leading to dangerous arrhythmias and increased risk of collapse. While exercise is essential for overall health, it must be approached with caution. Muscle training should focus on functional strength, not just aesthetics. Overexertion, especially in individuals who are not physically prepared, can put undue stress on the heart.

Before beginning any intense physical regimen, it is advisable to undergo a basic ECG to assess heart health. This simple test can provide valuable insights and help identify any underlying issues that might increase the risk of heart problems during exercise.

(The author is a research scholar at BIT, Mesra, Ranchi.)

ON THE PALETTE

A few of Patwardhan's works.

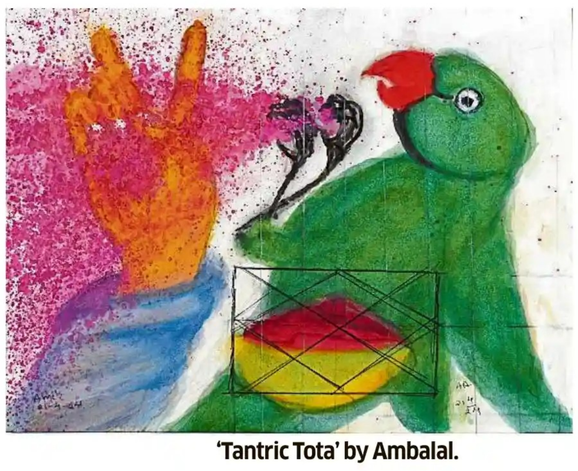
The splendour of the everyday

What makes both Ambalal and Patwardhan instantly relatable is their ability to connect with the mundanity of our existence through their art, writes Archana Khare Ghose

In a utopian world, merit should be enough for a practitioner of any profession to find success. But in our 'normal' world, obsessed with brands and pedigrees, it is often an act of courage to launch oneself in a field where your success is measured only by lofty degrees and designations. Two examples of such courage in the field of Indian art are well-known artists Amit Ambalal and Sudhir Patwardhan, both of whose solo exhibitions were recently hosted by New Delhi's premier galleries — Gallery Espace and Vadehra Art Gallery.

Ambalal and Patwardhan are two of India's highly respected and self-taught artists, who did not enter the hallowed portals of any high-profile art school, yet have attained success that many can only aspire to. (Here, it is pertinent to mention one of their ilk, Maqbool Fida Husain — also a largely self-taught artist, who recently headlined the art world when his canvas Untitled (Gram Yatra) sold for Rs 118.62 crore, becoming one of the most expensive Indian works of art ever).

'Crocodile Tears' by Ambalal.



'Tantric Tota' by Ambalal.

A quick walkthrough of both the exhibitions is enough for even the most lay admirers of art to comprehend what makes Amit Ambalal and Sudhir Patwardhan the successful and celebrated artists they are. After all, they have both been at it for decades: Ambalal, now 81, liquidated his family business of textiles to pursue his passion for painting at the age of 36, whereas Patwardhan, now 75, is a practising radiologist who became a full-time artist in 2005.

While Ambalal gives expression to the little pleasures of la vie quotidienne (ordinary, day-to-day life), mostly depicted through a monkey at its naughtiest in his most recent exhibition, Patwardhan trains a more serious eye on the rampant construction in the city of Mumbai, which is a city perpetually being built as long as one can remember. Both their artworks delight, engage, and provoke the onlooker to pause and think, drawing them in with their directness, and leave one spellbound, just as works by any trained artist would.

"Honestly, I have not cared whether an artist is trained or not as long as their art can engage the viewer and the artist knows what they are doing," says Renu Modi, founder and director of Gallery Espace, which turned 35 last year. "In all these years, I have always followed my instinct, and fortunately, it has stood me in good stead," she adds.

Ahmedabad-based Ambalal's recent works at Gallery Espace delighted with their sheer execution, where their subject played only a supporting role in engaging the viewer. The exhibition featured over 30 paintings made by the artist in the past two years, mostly watercolours and acrylics on canvas. Wit and humour have been the leitmotif of Ambalal's art, which was amply on display at his latest solo. It is perhaps the raw playfulness that he imbues his canvases with that makes his art stand out in the universe of contemporary Indian art.

While Ambalal has carved a niche for himself in representing the droll realities of life with his distinctive style of humour, Patwardhan, on the other hand, has steadily yet firmly built his reputation as a chronicler of life in the city of Mumbai (among other subjects that he paints). A graduate of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, Patwardhan began painting full-time in 2005. "Though I did not train as an artist, I consulted my painter friends throughout my journey, which helped me in perfecting my skills and style," says Patwardhan, whose exhibition, 'Cities: Built, Broken', after showing in New Delhi, was on view at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, till recently.

Patwardhan says that the city of Mumbai always enchanted him with its varied and richly layered identities, but it's the aspect of it being under construction at all times that engrossed him strongly. "It's a densely populated city wherein people move here and there on their chores in great numbers through the day, throughout the year. My art brings focus on individuals as they navigate their way through this maze while going about their daily lives. The landscape of their neighbourhood undergoes a rapid change while they go about their work; many new structures come up and older ones disappear as they manoeuvre and adjust their lives with the changing physical realities," he explains.

This is brought about most succinctly in his latest works on the subject, where a human figure often finds itself wedged in between bamboo scaffoldings and iron and steel girders, giving shape to mammoth structures. The rush of humans going about their daily chores while navigating their way through routes rendered precarious due to construction material strewn around, even as motor vehicles of all sizes seem to honk their way onward in this maze, is brought out with great attention in Patwardhan's works. One can almost hear the crazy buzz of a megacity like Mumbai while looking at his works in the silent ambience of a gallery.

What makes both Ambalal and Patwardhan instantly relatable is their ability to connect with the mundanity of human existence through their art, which, despite being laden with meanings, is as direct as it can get for even a lay admirer of art. It is not puerile, perhaps, to conjecture that their lack of institutional training may have had a role to play in their ability to remain true to real life.

MOTLEY GARDEN

Between admiration and temptation

In our social media age, people photograph plants in parks and along roadsides, only to return with pruning shears to snip them off for 'likes', rues Subhashini Chandramani

I was working in the living room when I heard the gate open. There was no knock or call, just the faint rustle of movement outside. I stepped out to see a woman near the Nandibatlu (Crepe jasmine) shrub next to the gate, gathering flowers with quiet efficiency.

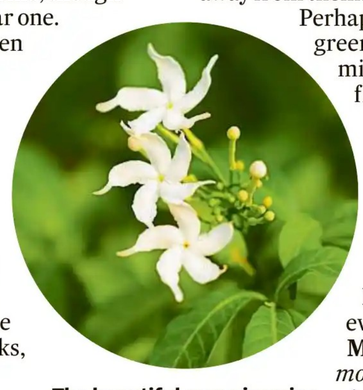
Tabernaemontana divaricata, also called Nandibatlu, Nandiyavattai, Chandni, Crepe Jasmine or Moonbeam, stood in full bloom, its white pinwheel flowers bright against glossy green leaves. The ground beneath it was carpeted in white.

The lady was short and frail. She carried a striped plastic bag already filled with flowers, yellow oleanders among them. She glanced at me once, said the flowers were for her *pooja*, and returned to her task. For someone so slight, she moved with surprising speed and determination, as if the flowers might vanish if she slowed down.

I stood there watching her strip the branches bare. After a while, she looked up and asked if I could get her a stool. I thought she wanted to sit, perhaps worn out from her plucking spree. But she said she wanted it to reach the flowers on the top branches! I was taken aback. I told her she couldn't take any more flowers and suggested she grow her own, even offered her a cutting. My voice wasn't raised, but it was firm. I was more amused than angry. She paused, gave me a look, and then left without a word of thanks. It struck me that she believed the flowers were hers to take!

The crepe jasmine shrub in the author's garden, lush with blooms. PIC BY AUTHOR

That day stayed with me, though the scene was a familiar one. Our Nandibatlu has seen many such visitors. Some would slip in after the lights go out in our house to gather flowers, and others would appear at dawn. The plant was generous to everyone, yet it was so often handled roughly. Branches were yanked down with sticks, pulled until they bent or broke. And then one morning, someone tugged at the main stem until it split into two. The plant never recovered, and within weeks it was gone.



The beautiful crepe jasmine.

I wonder if the one who broke it ever felt guilty, knowing how a single tug undid years of care. Yet guilt seems almost beside the point when such behaviour is so widespread, when plants are treated as though they cannot be harmed at all.

In our social media age, where every beautiful flower becomes a 'must-have' moment, the line between admiring and claiming has blurred completely. I've seen people photograph plants in parks and along roadsides, only to return with pruning shears to snip them off for social media 'likes.' The irony is that those who rip off are the least likely to grow what they've taken. A plant adapted to the sidewalk rarely survives once torn from its place. With most of its roots gone, it struggles and usually withers.

When we normalise this kind of behaviour, we lose something essential about community respect. Every garden, no matter how small, represents someone's faith in tomorrow: seeds planted out of love, watered through dry spells, protected through storms, and cherished at first bloom. When we take without asking, we're not just taking flowers; we're taking a piece of faith away from them.

Perhaps if that woman in the green saree had asked, I might have gladly picked flowers for her myself, or shown her which ones to take. Instead, her quiet assumption that the flowers were simply there for the taking left me wondering. Generosity, I've learned, has limits, even in the garden.

Motley Garden *is your monthly kaleidoscopic view into a sustainable garden ecosystem. The author believes gardens are shared spaces where plants and creatures thrive together.*

READER QUERY

Even in our own homes, care often comes down to simple attentiveness. Suma sent me a photo of her Jade plant, a small-leaved variety, asking why it was shedding leaves. The plant was on a centre table inside the house, far from any sunlight.

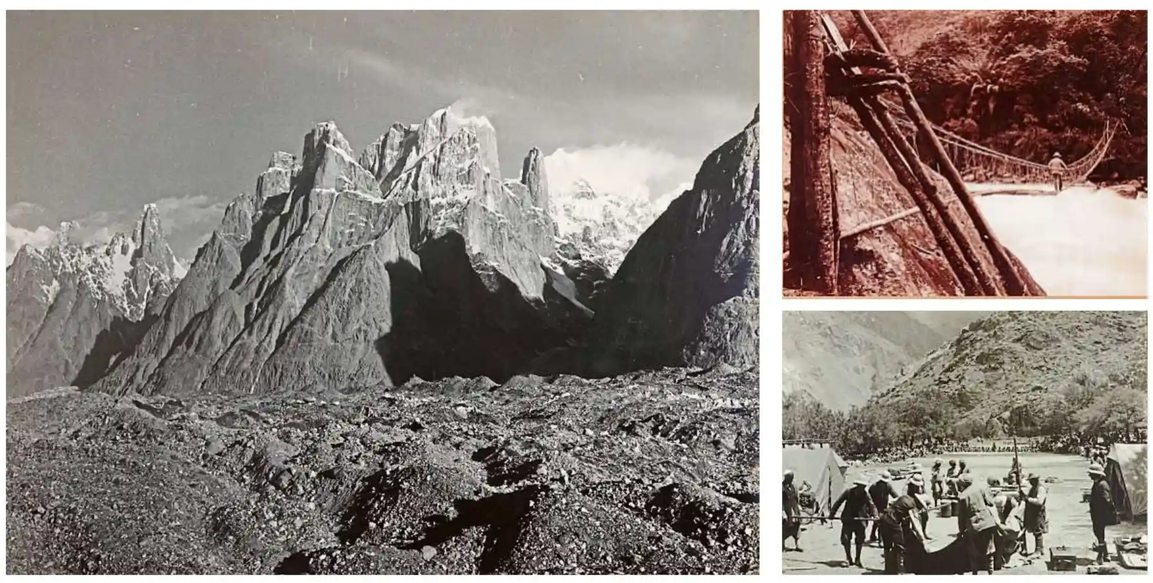
This is a common mistake. A "houseplant" doesn't mean it can live without light. It only means it can tolerate lower levels compared to outdoor plants. Jade still needs bright, indirect sunlight through the day. Leaf drop usually happens because of overwatering, poor drainage, or stress. Repot it in fresh soil, water only when it wilts and shift it to a brighter spot. With some care, it should recover.

Share your stories and plant queries at **@allthingsinmygarden.** *Together, we can grow a community of gardeners.*

LENSCRAFT

Vittorio Sella: Poet of the peaks

The pioneering Italian photographer was also an explorer, an artist and a storyteller of the mountains who found beauty in the harshest of terrains, writes Pushkar V



A few of Sella's photographs. (Pics courtesy: DAG)

Some photographs merely document a scene, while others transport you into the heart of a place. Vittorio Sella's images fall into the latter category. At a time when mountaineering was still in its early days and photography required hauling heavy equipment up treacherous terrain, Sella's work in the Himalayas stands as a testament to endurance, art, creativity and artistry. The book Vittorio Sella: Photographer in the Himalaya celebrates a man whose lens brought the world closer to some of the world's most remote and breathtaking landscapes.

Born in 1859, Sella was not only a photographer but also an explorer, an artist and a storyteller of the mountains. His journeys into the Himalayas were gruelling; they demanded immense physical and technical skill. He carried close to 30 kg of camera equipment through snow-covered landscapes, often at altitudes where even survival was a challenge, especially with the nascent mountaineering equipment of the time. Yet, the images he produced are nothing short of mesmerising. This book compiles some of his most remarkable photographs, offering a window into his extraordinary expeditions and the conditions he faced. It includes a few pull-out panoramas of the peaks as well. What makes this collection so special is the way Sella's photographs capture not just mountains but also their soul. His images reveal the grandeur of the peaks, the shifting moods of light and shadow, and the sheer vastness of the Himalayas. The book's essays add depth to the visuals, offering insight into Sella's collaborations with legendary explorers like the Duke of Abruzzi and his unwavering commitment to his craft, even as he captured the contrasts of many mountain ranges.

In today's digital era, where we can shoot hundreds of photos from a trip to a park in a single day, Sella had to deliberate about every shot. Early cameras lacked viewfinders, forcing him to rely on intuition and experience to frame his compositions. Each image was a carefully considered effort, and the results, now masterpieces, stand as a testament to his remarkable skill and vision. The details in his images, the carefully composed frames and the dramatic contrasts create a sense of awe. His mastery of panoramic photography was groundbreaking for his time. He meticulously stitched together multiple images to showcase entire mountain ranges, such as a six-photo composition of the Kanchenjunga range from 1899.

The sepia tones of his early photographs lend them a timeless quality, evoking a sense of nostalgia for an era of true exploration.

Beyond the landscapes, Sella's lens also captured the life of remote Himalayan villages. His photographs show people engaged in a game of polo, monks standing outside Tibetan temples or monasteries and scenes of daily survival in the harsh mountain environment. These images in the book remind us that mountains are not just towering peaks; they are also homes to resilient communities shaped by their surroundings. Sella's impact extended beyond his lifetime. His work deeply inspired the legendary photographer Ansel Adams, who once said that Sella's images "move the spectator to a religious awe." This sentiment is true as one flips through the pages of this book.

Sella's devotion to capturing the sublime beauty of nature paved the way for generations of landscape photographers, proving that photography is not just about documenting a place, but is also about experiencing it. Vittorio Sella: Photographer in the Himalaya is an essential read, especially if you are a landscape enthusiast.

The book is a tribute to a man who found beauty in the harshest of places and whose images continue to inspire curiosity and appreciation for the wildest landscapes on Earth.

Printed and published by B A Ravi on behalf of The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, at The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, Plot nos. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area, Bengaluru - 560 074. Executive Editor: K V Subramanya (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act). Editorial Office: 75, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. E-mail: editor@deccanherald.co.in. Phone: 080-45557333, Editorial: 080-45557279/080-45557280, Circ: 080-45557204, Advt: 080-45557163/080-45557164. Also printed at Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Davangere, Mysuru and Hosapete. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. RNI No 3608/57. Registered, Regn. No: KRNA/BGE/1027/2023-2025, posted at Bangalore PSO, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 026. Website: www.printersmysore.com